AUGUSTA;

OR, THE

FEMALE TRAVELLERS.

A NOVEL.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR WILLIAM LANE,

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Eliza Foote

AUGUSTA.

CHAPTER XI.

DISCOURSE BETWEEN MISS WOODVILLE AND MISS BRENTON UPON THEIR SITUATION — SUDDEN DEPARTURE OF THE TWO OFFICERS — THEIR BEHAVIOUR AND THAT OF THE TWO LADIES UPON THIS OCCASION.

WHEN they had left us, we aſked the young Engliſh woman our attendant, whether the reality of Miſs

Brenton's ſituation and mine was known in the houſe.—Madam, anſwered ſhe, it is ſaid that you are two Engliſh ladies, entruſted by your friends to the protection of the two colonels in your way to Paris; where you intend to go after paying your reſpects to their reſpective mothers; one of whom lives at no great diſtance on the other ſide of Rheims, with a ſecond huſband.

On receiving this anſwer, both Miſs Brenton and I ſhook our heads, giving each other a ſignificant look. Withdrawing to the other end of the room with my friend, I aſked her whether we might ſafely place confidence in our countrywoman, whoſe countenance and behaviour were indeed very pre-

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poſſeſſing.

poſſeſſing. Her opinion proving in the affirmative, I told her it entirely coincided with mine. Upon which, bidding our attendant to ſit down, we entered into a long diſcourſe with her, and made her acquainted with every circumſtance that had happened; telling her that from the ingenuouſneſs of her appearance, and her being our countrywoman, we thought that we might ſafely unboſom ourſelves, and conſider her as a friend.

She thanked us for the truſt we honoured her with in terms that ſhewed ſhe had been very well educated; and ſaid ſeveral things upon the ſubject that proved her a woman of exceeding good ſenſe. She concluded by

requeſting that we would grant her the liberty of adviſing us both, if we could find in our hearts to look over what had been done, to beſtow our good graces upon our two lovers, and, unleſs we were already pre-engaged, by no means to reject their addreſſes; they were gentlemen of the moſt amiable character, and very large fortune, and would, on the demiſe of ſundry relations come into ſtill greater poſſeſſions.

We deſired her to keep matters in the greateſt ſecreſy, and in the mean time to give us all the information ſhe could procure in whatever related to us.

When

When ſhe was gone, I aſked Miſs Brenton what were her thoughts concerning the very uncommon adventure in which our deſtiny had brought us ſo far forward. My dear Auguſta, ſaid ſhe, you have anticipated my queſtion, and I believe I ſhall anticipate your anſwer, by aſſuring you it is of ſo extraordinary a kind, that it has bereaved me of the power of giving any anſwer.

I am, ſaid I, preciſely in the ſame ſituation; but I think we both may find a clue that will enable us to unravel the plot without any great difficulty. Let us conſult our hearts, and aſk them whether they are entangled, or

at liberty: this will at once lead to a decision of this business.

This proposal of mine occasioned some moments silence. What says your heart? exclaimed Miss Brenton first. Alas! said I, my consultation has been too short, and it is become so circumspect since the treatment it met with from Mr. Stanley, that it trembles at the thoughts of any sort of engagement, and is become almost callous ever since. You, my dear Nancy, that have experienced no such falsehood, may probably be less difficult in your opinion of the other sex.

Oh no, answered she: though I have never yet been deceived, having never had

had a lover, I am perfectly of the opinion which Chamont in the Orphan recommends to his ſiſter Monimia. I am determined to truſt no man; but were I otherwiſe diſpoſed, the experience I have learned at your coſt, will, I hope, prove a ſufficient preventive, and guard me for ever from the wiles of men.

But to come cloſer in with the point, continued I, do you imagine that our two French lovers have any chance of ſucceeding? Do you diſlike your admirer ſo much, as never to forgive him the inſult of running off with you?

When a man runs off with a woman in the manner they have done with us,

anſwered ſhe, I muſt confeſs myſelf ſo romantically inclined, that I think it the leaſt I can do to forgive him, eſpecially ſhould I be convinced that love alone is at the bottom of his motive: then, my dear Auguſta, recollect what they told us of their unhappy ſituation during the laſt campaign. A man who ſeeks death from deſpair of obtaining the poſſeſſion of the woman he loves, muſt certainly be in earneſt. We muſt either diſbelieve them, or admit their paſſion to be ſincere.

Nancy, ſaid I, you have told me enough; were I as totally diſengaged as you are, I hardly believe I could reſiſt the addreſſes of my French lover any more than you can: but an inſuperable

ſuperable bar ſtands in his way; not Mr. Stanley I'll aſſure you; I have entirely overcome my former weakneſs on his account; but there is a far worthier character whom I ſhould fear to render unhappy, were I to beſtow myſelf upon my French admirer. Mr. Villars, I now find, has a much greater influence over me than I imagined: this adventure has diſcloſed the ſecret which lay before cloſe concealed within the deepeſt receſſes of my heart: I thought once that I only pitied Mr. Villars for his attachment to me—but now, continued Miſs Brenton, you find at laſt that you love him.

But what, proceeded ſhe, muſt be done with your admirer here? This,

my dear Auguſta, is a ſerious matter. I am perſuaded that were you to give him a poſitive denial at preſent, he would either piſtol himſelf, or procure a quick termination of his grief, as ſoon as he ſhould find an honourable opportunity of doing it the next campaign. Beſides, here is that worthy old lady his mother, whoſe life will undoubtedly be ſhortened by ſuch an event. His ſiſter too——I can hardly go on for the dreadful proſpect before me, ſhould you be reſolute in what you ſeem to propoſe. Let me conjure you by the ſincerity of our friendſhip, to act with the matureſt deliberation in this affair. Should I ever be prevailed upon to give my hand to my admirer, who, I frankly confeſs, is far from being diſa-

greeable

greeable to me, I will not yield to his ſolicitations till I have made a longer trial of him. Much as we have heard of the excellence of their character, he ſhall for his part undergo a full year's probation of his temper and good qualities, before I acknowledge my predilection for him.

Would you have me then, my dear friend, I replied, forego the duty I owe to the beſt of brothers, and the kindeſt of aunts, in favour of a man whom the world will ſtigmatize as my raviſher? for whatever we may know, and think of our two admirers, Ill-nature will, you may depend, repreſent them in that light. Were we to give them our hands, Scandal would whiſper that we

did it for the preſervation of our characters much more than from any real affection.

Far be it from my intentions to over-perſuade you, replied Miſs Brenton; but a twelvemonth will unfold what is now too much hidden to reaſon upon. We are embarked on a dangerous voyage, and have a variety of dangers to ſteer through. Who knows in what manner the intelligence of this adventure will be received among our friends? It is ſo unuſual a one, that poſſibly ſome may imagine, and others affect to imagine, that we were not carried off without our previous conſent. Should ſuch a belief take place, and the envy of ſome of your relations might, you well

well know, too readily give it countenance, do you think that Mr. Villars himſelf would not heſitate, and have his doubts? Should his mind be affected in your diſfavour, which is certainly a poſſible caſe, I am too well acquainted with the greatneſs of your ſpirit, to admit that you would ſue to him through any medium for a renewal of his addreſſes. If therefore your heart is not irretrieveably in his poſſeſſion, preſerve it reſolutely in your own, and wait with patience and firmneſs till the truth of what has happened to us is ſo firmly eſtabliſhed, as to enable us to defy the ſhafts of Malevolence and the tongue of Slander. By the time that period is arrived, we ſhall have had

ample

ample opportunity to aſcertain in what manner it is ſafe for both of us to act.

After pondering a few moments—You are, ſaid I, a girl of great diſcretion and foreſight, my dear Nancy, and this converſation will furniſh a chapter much to your credit in the hiſtory of our joint lives. You reaſon too conſiſtently to be gainſaid, and I muſt, I find, reſign myſelf wholly to your directions.

When we roſe next morning, our Engliſh attendant told us, that in conſequence of a letter juſt arrived expreſs, both of our admirers would be under the

the neceſſity of leaving us, and that they had already given orders for their ſervants to get every thing ready for ſetting out.

We both turned pale at this intelligence for which we were not able to account. Our ſituation was ſuch, that every motion of theſe two gentlemen was now become intereſting to us. We could not hear therefore of their leaving us ſo ſuddenly, without being greatly alarmed.

Upon entering the hall where the whole company of the preceding evening was waiting for us, our good old lady accoſted us with tears in her eyes. There was not indeed a dry eye in the whole

whole company. My lovely gueſts, ſaid ſhe, here are melancholy tidings come. My two ſons, for I have always called them ſuch, are called upon by the ſtern laws of honour to return to their duty with all ſpeed poſſible. Your countrymen (meaning the Engliſh) are, it ſeems, ſo full of action and enterprize, that they will not allow any reſpite to our people in Germany. But before my ſons take their leave of you, I muſt intercede in their name, that you will not forſake us in their abſence, which it is expected will not be of long continuance.

After the determination that had reſulted from our conſultation the antecedent night, I thought there was no impro-

impropriety in aſſenting to her requeſt, which I took upon me to do for both; excepting however the caſe of our being remanded home by our relations.

For this compliance we received the cordial thanks of the old lady and all preſent. Our two admirers were overjoyed, and profuſe in their expreſſions of gratitude. Their attachment, they aſſured us, would remain inviolable, and nothing but death would put an end to it.

We now ſat down to breakfaſt. The canon was not in company; at which no body was diſpleaſed. It was uſual with him to dine there almoſt every day,

day, and to return in the afternoon to his houſe at Rheims. But the difference that had happened between him and our two gentlemen, and the old officer eſpecially, had hurried him away before his time; and it was not expected, from the humour he was in, that they ſhould ſee him again for ſome days.

By the time breakfaſt was finiſhed, Miſs Brenton and I found ourſelves alone with our lovers. They took that opportunity to renew their reſpective vows of unalterable fidelity; they fell upon their knees, and kiſſed our hands with every demonſtration of the ſincereſt, and I may truly ſay the moſt honourable attachment.

I am

I am fully warranted in uſing ſuch an expreſſion, by the ſolid proofs they left in our poſſeſſion of the nobleneſs and generoſity of their ſentiments. They each of them delivered into our hands a packet ſealed up, earneſtly intreating us not to open it till they were gone. Neither Miſs Brenton nor myſelf would at firſt accept of theſe packets, as not knowing their contents: but they preſſed us reſpectively with ſo much warmth and tenderneſs not to refuſe them, that on Miſs Brenton's compliance with the ſupplications of her lover, who aſſured her, as my lover did me, that theſe packets concerned both our honours, I yielded at laſt to the ſolicitations of mine.

Beſides

Beſides theſe packets, of which we did not then comprehend the meaning, they preſented us each with a magnificent gold watch, ſet with diamonds, and of high value, deſiring us to wear them for their ſakes: theſe alſo they urged the acceptance of ſo preſſingly, that we could not refuſe them.

Had not the idea of Mr. Villars interfered, ſure I am that the generous behaviour of my preſent admirer would have influenced my ſentiments in his behalf to the utmoſt extent of his wiſhes: but that idea hung upon my mind ſo forcibly, that I almoſt accuſed myſelf of infidelity in accepting what was thus in a manner forced upon me.

I verily

I verily believe that I ſhould have rejected all that was offered me, whatever the conſequence might have proved, had I not recollected the admonitions of Miſs Brenton, and that my notions concerning Mr. Villars were, in my preſent circumſtances, preſumption and uncertainty.

Theſe reflections obtruding themſelves in the midſt of the tokens I was receiving of the ſincerity of my lover's attachment, overpowered me ſo far, as almoſt to make me faint. I turned pale, and could hardly ſupport myſelf in my chair. My ſituation affected him ſo much, that he was obliged to have recourſe to a glaſs of water to prevent himſelf from fainting.

It was far otherwiſe with Miſs Brenton. Notwithſtanding the diſorder of my mind, I plainly perceived that ſhe received the homage of her lover with unfeigned ſatisfaction; and that there was a reciprocal correſpondence between their reſpective ſentiments for each other. The truth was, that her heart having never been pre-occupied, it poſſeſſed that ſuſceptibility, which dear-bought experience of the inſtability of man is ſo apt to weaken in a female boſom.

Our lovers did not ſet out till late in the afternoon. It was with great difficulty they tore themſelves from Miſs Brenton and me, who could not refrain from ſhedding tears when they took

took their laſt leave, nor refuſe them a parting embrace.

When they were gone, we retired to our apartment, where we again reſumed the diſcourſe upon the ſingularity of our fate, and the extraordinary adventures we both ſeemed deſtined to experience.

I now gave vent to the uneaſineſs of my mind, and acknowledged the perplexity I had felt while my lover was pouring out, as it were, his ſoul into my boſom; which, notwithſtanding the ardour and ſincerity of his vows, felt an invincible repugnance to receive them. You, my dear Nancy, ſaid I, labour not under the difficulty that I do;

do; your heart is completely your own; the predilection that you feel for your admirer is unallayed with any fear of offending the laws of delicacy: as you are his firſt paſſion, if he may be believed, and I hold them both worthy of our entire belief, ſo permit me to ſay he is your firſt love; but the caſe between my lover and me is far different. He has my eſteem and my gratitude; there is no degree of felicity which I do not wiſh him with all the warmth of which I am capable: but all this is not love; and though I am far from not ſetting the higheſt value upon your counſels, I cannot diſtance the idea that is perpetually bringing Mr. Villars to my mind.

Auguſta

Auguſta, replied Miſs Brenton, neither do I pretend that you ſhould baniſh him abſolutely from your thoughts. Mr. Villars is a gentleman every way deſerving of your attachment on a ſuppoſition that he repays you with his own: but prudence authorizes a woman that has been ſo much deceived as you, to guard againſt the contingencies of infidelity: were you certain that Mr. Villars retains his paſſion for you, no earthly motive ought to induce you to forſake him; but the examples of inconſtancy in men are ſo frequent and glaring, that it is a duty we owe to the character of diſcretion, which is the chief praiſe of our ſex, not to inſlave our inclinations to any men,

while it remains in their power to make us the victims of our fondneſs and credulity.

Though I could not deny the juſtneſs of Miſs Brenton's obſervations, I found an inſuperable averſeneſs to bring them home to my caſe. As it was impoſſible however to alledge any proper arguments in contradiction to them, I ſilently acquieſced; but not without fetching a deep ſigh; at which Miſs Brenton ſmilingly ſaid—Is that for your French or your Engliſh lover?—Making her no anſwer—Auguſta, continued ſhe, facts are the beſt proofs of love: words are proverbially but air. Now I would venture all my expectations in this world,

world, that we have there (pointing to the packets that lay on the table) ſuch authentic documents of the faith and loyalty of our two friends, as will make it impoſſible to ſet the truth of any lover you may have had in competition with their's.

So ſaying, ſhe broke open the ſeal of the packet that was addreſſed to her. It ſhewed how rightly ſhe had conjectured. It was, I might truly ſay, worth its weight, not in gold, but in diamonds; containing what in the eaſtern ſtile of the preſent day might be called a buſſe of one hundred thouſand livres. Such was the value they were rated at in a ſcroll of parchment that lay by them, carefully pleated,

with directions on the outſide to examine it attentively. It was accompanied with another large piece of parchment, making over to her a full and free donation of theſe diamonds, of which it repeated the value, ſpecifying their quality and quantity, and by whom they had been eſtimated. There was another parchment, on which was written a circumſtantial account of the manner of their ſeizing and carrying us off. Herein nothing was omitted that could clear our character, and make it fully appear that we were not to be charged with the leaſt connivance or previous knowledge or ſuſpicion of the fact. It contained, as a reparation and atonement for the injury done to us, an obligation on the part

of

of Miſs Brenton's lover to marry her under the penalty of one half of ſuch part of his fortune as was at his diſpoſal.

The packet addreſſed to me was preciſely of the ſame tenor; they were both ſigned and ſealed by our two friends in due form, and atteſted by the old lady, their two ſiſters, and the major.

When we had ſufficiently peruſed them—Now, cried Miſs Brenton, is it in our power to look back to England any more? Was ever ſtronger teſtimony given of exalted and diſintereſted love? I think myſelf bound by every tie that

links human nature together, to vow and obſerve the ſtricteſt attachment to ſo perfect a lover, not from any motive of the benefits conferred upon me; for I ſhall reſtore all but the vouchers of your honour and mine.

I was charmed with this declaration of Miſs Brenton, both as it diſplayed the nobleneſs of her ſentiments, and as it coincided with the reſolution I had taken myſelf. Locking one of her hands in mine—Now, ſaid I, we have a ſtriking opportunity of doing honour both to our country and to ourſelves, by reſtoring what has been given to us with a magnanimity not unequal to the generoſity which beſtowed it.

We

We executed our reſolution without delay. We went down ſtairs into the hall, where we found the company we had left, ſitting together in a mournful ſilence, which denoted the grief they felt at the departure of our two friends, thus taken from them at the expiration of a campaign which they had looked upon as terminated, and ſent anew to encounter the hardſhips and ſeverities of a winter's ſervice.

We approached the old lady with great compoſure, and delivered our reſpective packets into her hands with a very low curtſey. They ſeemed all aſtoniſhed at this action, and aſked us if we knew the contents:—Yes, ſaid I; and for that reaſon we now reſtore

them. I told them however, that we had kept the parchments we valued moſt, thoſe wherein they had done juſtice to our character by a faithful recital of the manner they had ſeized our perſons.

This immediate reſtoration of papers of ſo much value to us, ſtruck them I plainly ſaw with the higheſt admiration. As it was done without heſitation, it ſhewed them that our native diſpoſition was above all mean views. The major in particular was ſo charmed with us, that lifting up his wooden leg—I have loſt, ſaid he, one of my legs in the king's ſervice, but I would willingly have loſt the other too, to be the father of two ſuch daughters.

We

We replied to his compliment with a ſmile and a curtſey. But the old lady who held the packets in her hand, after pondering ſome moments—Brother, ſaid ſhe, addreſſing herſelf to the major, what right have I to accept of theſe packets? I am poſitive that my ſons would never conſent to receive them, were they here. They ſhall remain in your poſſeſſion as pledges and monuments of their honour, and as the real and indiſputable property of theſe young ladies, to whom they belong in the ſtricteſt juſtice, and who cannot, in my opinion, reſtore them with any propriety to any but their primitive owners.

Thus ſaying, ſhe conſigned the packets into the hands of her brother-in-law; who told us that he rejoiced in the honour of being our truſtees, and conſidered the treaſure depoſited in his care as the more valuable for being our own.

I then produced the watches, which I told the old lady we deſigned to make uſe of while we had the happineſs to remain at her houſe, as a token of the reſpect we bore to herſelf, and to ſhew that in what we had done reſpecting the packets, we were not actuated by undue pride, but conſulted only the dictates of that honour which ought to guide thoſe women who valued their

their character above all other conſiderations.

The good old lady burſting into tears—Oh my dear young ladies, ſaid ſhe, may it not be my fate to have ſeen ſo much excellence only to enjoy it for a while, and then to part with it for ever! But I will not anticipate evils before they come; let me poſſeſs the happineſs of having you under my roof while it may laſt, and leave the reſt to the deciſion of that Power which provides beſt for us all.

The endeavours of the major at ſupper to revive our ſpirits, though not totally loſt, did not produce their cuſtomary effect. A gloom was diffuſed

over the countenance of the old lady and the two ſiſters, that could not be ſo diſpelled as not to betray the uneaſineſs they felt at the abrupt and unexpected departure of the two gentlemen. What contributed to it in a very material degree, was the intelligence contained in the newſpapers, that Prince Ferdinand's motions indicated a deſign to carry on a winter campaign, and that the French army was in conſequence preparing to face him.

When Miſs Brenton and I were retired to our apartment, we renewed our former converſations on the peculiarity of our ſituation. Though I could not complain that it was rigorous, yet I told her that I thought mine much more morti-

mortifying than her own. She had no retroſpects of any kind to wound her peace; but true it was that the method taken to woo her had been ſomewhat harſh at firſt; but that as all was well that ended well, ſhe had no reaſon to lament her deſtiny: ſhe had found a moſt fond and generous lover, a man of rank, fortune, and character:—What more could ſhe have found at home? But with reſpect to me, though her remarks touching Mr. Villars were highly judicious, yet they did not remove the opinion I entertained of his attachment to me; it might be wrongly founded; but poſſibly, by the ſame rule, might alſo be juſt. It was this uncertainty that diſtracted me; I could

not

not patiently endure the perplexity ariſing from ſo dubious a ſituation.

She did not deny my aſſertions; but ſtill recurred to the neceſſity of coming haſtily to no deciſion in a caſe where the happineſs of my whole future life depended ſo evidently on my taking a proper one. Life, ſaid ſhe, is often like a ſtory, the different parts of which are ill connected. Read the adventures that have happened in real life; how frequently do we find them as marvellous and unexpected as thoſe that fill the wildeſt and moſt incoherent romances? Let us therefore be leſs uneaſy about futurity, and keep ſteadily to one point—the preſervation

of

of our character,—which is in fact the only thing truſted to our care. As nothing elſe is at our diſpoſal, and events will happen independent of all caution and foreſight, we muſt endeavour to meet them in ſuch a manner as to render them ſubſervient to our advantage. We have hitherto done no more than yielded to unavoidable neceſſity: the interval that will elapſe before the return of our lovers will probably be ſufficient to aſcertain the truth or unreality of your opinion concerning Mr. Villars. The abſence of theſe two gentlemen is on that account the moſt fortunate circumſtance that could have befallen you.

I readily

I readily coincided with this latter reflection, hoping that before long I ſhould be favoured with ſome opportunity of clearing up the darkneſs in which my mind was involved, and of coming to ſome preciſe deciſion what I had to expect from Mr. Villars; reſolving, I will freely confeſs, ſhould I find myſelf forſaken by him, to transfer my affections as well as I could to my French lover.

CHAP-

CHAPTER XII.

STORY OF AN ENGLISH CAPUCHIN FRIAR.

THE next morning Miſs Brenton and I were not diſagreeably ſurprized when we came down to breakfaſt, at meeting there with the Engliſh Capuchin Friar who had ſpoken to us at the inn. He paid his reſpects to us moſt gracefully; and notwithſtanding the uncouthneſs of his garb, appeared

in

in his behaviour and manners a perſon far removed from the vulgar.

He was highly eſteemed by our two admirers, who had, it ſeems, invited him to viſit them, and whoſe ſudden departure ſeemed to give him great concern. He was, I could plainly perceive, a favourite in this family, and on a footing of great friendſhip and intimacy with the old officer eſpecially, who, previous to our coming down ſtairs, had, as we found afterwards, acquainted him with our whole hiſtory.

When breakfaſt was over, being our countryman, he was left with Miſs Brenton and me, from a very natural pre-

preſumption that we ſhould be glad of an opportunity of diſcourſing with him. Not doubting from the agreeableneſs of his converſation at breakfaſt, that he had once figured in the gay world, I was accordingly prompted by curioſity to know what motives could have induced him to bid adieu to ſcenes wherein he was evidently ſo well calculated to ſhine.

After complimenting him with the favourable opinion we both entertained of his merit, we expreſſed our amazement at the condition he had embraced; and aſked him whether he would be offended at our deſiring him to ſatisfy us for what reaſons he had forſaken the world, at a time of life when

when it muſt have had ſo many allurements to detain a perſon of his merit.

My dear and much reſpected country-women, anſwered he, fetching a ſigh, with his hands folded, and his eyes turned to heaven, you impoſe a taſk upon me, which muſt neceſſarily recal tranſactions I wiſh it were poſſible to forget; but the pleaſure of gratifying two ſuch excellent women as I have been informed you are, will not ſuffer me to deny you a recital, which, I am convinced from the goodneſs of your hearts, will excite your ſympathy, and decreaſe your ſurprize at the habit in which you ſee me.

I was

I was born at Exeter. A very reputable merchant was my father. Being three ſons, and loſing our mother very young, the one was ſent to an uncle in the Weſt Indies, who had married a lady of that country, by whom he had no children: the other went to London, to be under the care of a relation who had been his godfather; and I remained at home; my father intending that I ſhould be brought up under his eye, in order to inherit his buſineſs, which was very profitable. But I did not remain with him longer than my ſeventh year. My uncle having loſt his lady, returned from the Weſt Indies with a plentiful fortune, having committed the care of his plantations to his nephew, who was a very

very active and intelligent young man. He was intending to go to France, on a visit to a French gentleman, with whom he had contracted a great intimacy in the West Indies through commercial connexions. Being a sprightly boy, he took a fancy to me, and proposed to my father to permit me to accompany him to France, where, he added at the same time, that a little stay would be advantageous to me; offering to undertake the expence of placing me at school there, in order to learn the language. My uncle's kindness was thankfully accepted by my father; I went over to France, and was placed in a celebrated academy, where I had the opportunity of being instructed

ſtructed in all ſuch accompliſhments as become gentlemen who are deſtined for the world. My uncle, who had much influence over my father, prevailed upon him to lengthen the time he had allotted for my ſtay in France, giving him ſo favourable an account of my proficiency in all kinds of uſeful learning, that he thought me ſo far deſerving of his encouragement, as to ſend me to Paris, in order to put the finiſhing hand to my improvement.

I had now remained ten years abſent from my father, who began to be very impatient to ſee a ſon with whoſe praiſes he was often entertained. I returned to England accordingly, and

was

was received as a favourite child. My father reſided now in London, together with my uncle. They lived in the higheſt union, intending to make a common ſtock of what they had, in order to increaſe it during their lives, and divide it at their demiſe between my father's three children.

The education I had received was of too gay a tint to reliſh the cloſe application requiſite in a counting-houſe. Both my uncle and father ſoon diſcovered that my inclinations led me to a different walk in life. A commiſſion in the army would have ſuited me better than any other propoſal they could have made; but the door was now

now ſhut upon all expectations of that kind in my own country. I had been brought up in the Roman Catholic religion from the time I firſt went to France, and was too ſincere in my belief to forſake it for any worldly intereſt. After caſting about in what manner to employ me, a young gentleman of my own perſuaſion, with whom I had formed an intimacy at Caen in Normandy, where we had been educated together, propoſed to take me for a companion in his travels. He was of Yorkſhire, where his family poſſeſſed a very conſiderable eſtate.

This ſituation was preciſely what I could moſt have wiſhed for. I travelled in company with this gentleman in

France, Italy, Germany, and the Low Countries, and returned to England after four years abſence, being now eight and twenty years of age.

As a military life ſtill continued uppermoſt in my thoughts, but as at the ſame time I reſolved never to bear arms againſt my country, it became a difficult matter to provide for me in that line. It occurred to me at laſt, that while I was at Bruſſels, I had met with ſeveral Iriſh gentlemen in the Auſtrian ſervice. Thither I directly determined to repair, in hope of meeting with an opportunity of embracing a profeſſion to which I felt myſelf irreſiſtibly inclined.

Having

Having obtained my father and uncle's conſent, I ſat out for that city in company with my aunt, who was conducting one of her daughters thither to place her in a convent. She was accompanied by a young gentlewoman, her intimate acquaintance, who came with her for the ſake of her company, as they were almoſt inſeparable. This gentlewoman was about my age, perfectly agreeable in her perſon, of a lively diſpoſition, and a handſome fortune.

Theſe, you will acknowledge, my dear ladies, were ſufficient attractions to any young man entirely at his own diſpoſal. I forgot a circumſtance which

I thought much in my favour; ſhe was a widow; her huſband, an elderly man, was lately dead, and had left her in affluent circumſtances. I can ſafely proteſt however, that theſe were not the principal inducements that led me firſt to think of her as a deſirable companion. Had I been intereſtedly inclined, I might, to ſpeak without vanity, have connected myſelf much more to my advantage long before I was acquainted with that lady.

My aunt, who had a ſincere affection for me, had contrived that I ſhould accompany her to Bruſſels with the view of introducing me to this lady. I had the fortune of winning her good graces without

without much difficulty. I hardly can tell which of the two made the firſt advances in the field of courtſhip.

I made however ſo ſpeedy a progreſs in her affections, that ſhe conſented to honour me with her hand upon her return to London; ſtipulating, however, that I ſhould abandon all thoughts of a military life. Notwithſtanding the junction of her fortune to what mine would be at the demiſe of my father and uncle, would have made the whole very conſiderable, I did not aſſent to this condition without much entreaty.

I now thought myſelf ſure of a young, beautiful, and wealthy bride, and be-

gan to arrange in my imagination the future courſe of my life, framing a variety of ſchemes for enjoying it in comfort and elegance.

We were now my aunt, my miſtreſs, and myſelf, preparing to return to England, when I was accoſted one day in a ſtreet not far from the houſe where we lodged, by an Iriſh gentleman, an officer in the Auſtrian ſervice. He deſired me very politely to favour him with an hour's converſation, which I readily agreed to. We walked together to the Park without ſpeaking a word. When we were arrived there—My dear Sir, ſaid he; looking upon you as a man of honour, I have long wiſhed for the pleaſure of your company

in

in this place, in order to decide a buſineſs with you, which I much fear can be decided no where elſe. I was extremely ſurprized at his words, and told him that I knew not his motive for bringing me to the place we were in; that if I had affronted him, and he required ſatisfaction, which I preſumed was his meaning, he muſt acquaint me in what; for of that I was abſolutely ignorant.

Sir, ſaid he, it grieves me to the ſoul, to differ with ſo worthy a gentleman as I take you to be; but the lady to whom you are at preſent paying your addreſſes, is mine by the ſtricteſt laws of juſtice. I ſtarted back at this expreſſion: Nay, Sir, ſaid he, be not

ſurprized; ſhe promiſed three years ago to marry me, as ſoon as her then huſband ſhould die.

He then proceeded to tell me that my miſtreſs being at Bruſſels at that time with my aunt, who was come over to place another of her daughters in a convent, he became acquainted with her, and was ſo happy as to obtain her good graces ſo far as to induce her to promiſe him her hand, if ever ſhe ſhould be at liberty to beſtow it.

My anſwer was, that if on conſulting the lady, ſhe frankly acknowledged that ſhe had paſſed her word to that purpoſe, I ſhould think him intitled to demand the performance of her promiſe; but that

that if ſhe denied the having made it, I could not in honour give her up. Were the caſe his own, I preſumed from his preſent behaviour, he would act as I did.

He replied that I ſpoke like a gentleman. He would, he ſaid, before proceeding any further, wait upon the lady, and receive an anſwer from her own mouth, which he would communicate to me.

We parted with great politeneſs. I returned home immediately, and acquainted my miſtreſs with what had paſſed. She denied, with great vehemence, her having made ſuch a promiſe to the gentleman in queſtion;

whom, on my deſcription of him, ſhe inſtantly recollected. He was not the only gentleman, ſaid ſhe who courted me while my late huſband was living, in hopes of partaking of his ſpoils when dead; but I took care to bind myſelf over to none, though I uſed civil words to them all.

While we were diſcourſing upon this ſubject, the gentleman himſelf was announced below. He was deſired to walk up. He was a tall, portly man, full of ſtatelineſs and gravity in his deportment: he told my miſtreſs that hearing ſhe was become at her own diſpoſal, he had intended to come over to England to renew the addreſſes ſhe had formerly honoured him by accept-

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ing of, and to remind her of the promiſe ſhe had kindly made to him, and which he hoped ſhe would not make him unhappy by retracting.

She anſwered him with great civility, that ſhe perfectly remembered the pleaſure ſhe had received in his acquaintance; but that ſhe had always reſpected her own character too much, to have formed an engagement of the nature he hinted at, while her huſband was yet alive.

The gentleman replied only with a low bow, and retired immediately. This interview was ſolely between him and my miſtreſs, as I retired to my

own apartment previous to his waiting upon her.

In the mean time I did not doubt but this affair would be attended with very ſerious conſequences. In this I was by no means deceived. In leſs than an hour after his departure, I received a meſſage acquainting me that he would gladly ſpeak to me. I complied with his requeſt immediately, and met him at the place he had appointed. He received me with great politeneſs; aſſured me he was extremely ſorry that it ſhould fall to his lot to be obliged to meaſure his ſword with mine; but that his character as a ſoldier was at ſtake, and he could not

ſuffer

ſuffer any man to rob him of his miſtreſs: that however ſhe now pretended the contrary, ſhe had ſolemnly engaged herſelf to him; otherwiſe he would not have thought of calling me, or any man, forth to fight him upon her account.

Now, Sir, ſaid he, aſſuming a very grave tone, as I preſume you are willing to meet me like a gentleman, I ſhall give you your own choice of time, place, and weapons: I am above diſſembling that I am uncommonly ſkilful at my ſword; if therefore you prefer piſtols, I have no objection. The ſurgeon of the regiment to which I belong will be preſent on my ſide; and

who-

whoever ſhould want his aſſiſtance may command it.

The intrepid calmneſs, added to the mannerly deportment of my antagoniſt, ſtruck me with admiration. I replied that his behaviour was ſo much of the gentleman, that I was equally ſorry with himſelf to be obliged to face him in the manner he demanded: but that I too well underſtood the laws of honour, to decline the meeting he required. For our mutual ſafety however, it would be prudent to decide the matter on the borders of France, that in caſe either of us ſhould fall, the other might be able to provide for his immediate ſecurity. I alſo added, that

that I ſhould employ a day or two in ſettling my affairs, and would be ready to attend him on the ſpot where he now ſtood at the expiration of that time.

We left each other in a very reſpectful manner. I could evidently ſee that it was with the utmoſt repugnance he engaged in this buſineſs; and that he would moſt willingly have avoided it, had he judged it conſiſtent with his reputation. This alone, and no malice to me, nor I believe any regard for my miſtreſs, prompted him throughout the whole of this unhappy affair.

I kept my intentions ſecret from every body except a French officer with whom

whom I had been acquainted in my travels, and whom now I found at Bruſſels. After having made a thorough ſettlement of my affairs, and diſpoſed of all I was worth in the manner I thought incumbent upon me, I went, accompanied by that officer to the ſpot where I had parted with my antagoniſt two days before. He was punctual to his aſſignation to a very minute, and we both perceived each other's coming at a diſtance. On meeting, he pulled off his hat, and ſhook me by the hand, as if we had been come together on the ſcore of friendſhip. Horſes being provided, we ſat out with our ſeconds that very hour; and the next day, as we travelled very faſt, we reached the frontiers of France. As we were all fatigued

fatigued with our journey, we agreed to reſt the remainder of that day, and terminate our buſineſs on the next, as early in the morning as we could conveniently.

During this journey not a ſyllable of its purport eſcaped any of us. We met at table in the inns where we put up, diſcourſing of indifferent matters with as much coolneſs, as if we had been met to quite other purpoſes than thoſe that occupied us.

Notwithſtanding I had been bred to high notions of honour, and had drawn my ſword two or three times, this was the firſt time I was going to do it premeditately. I reſolved however, not

to

to be guilty of wilful murder, and to contrive matters ſo as not to wound him in any dangerous part, but only in ſo ſlight a manner as juſt to diſable him.

Having taken this reſolution, I felt my mind perfectly at eaſe, and ſlept the whole night antecedent to the day of deciſion, with a tranquillity that ſurprized me, when I reflected on what might happen before the enſuing night.

We were all, according to the orders we had given, called up at five in the morning. Mounting our horſes, we rode ſome miles forward to a village, in the middle of which ſtood a poſt indi-

indicating the boundary between the French and the Auſtrian dominions. We alighted in a field belonging to theſe, and faſtening our horſes to a tree, we prepared for action. As neither of us, it was plain, bore each other any malice, and it was merely in compliance with eſtabliſhed notions that we came to this cruel extremity, it was propoſed by our ſeconds, that after exchanging two ſhot each, if none of them took place, the buſineſs ſhould be conſidered as decided, and we ſhould depart in peace. But my antagoniſt inſiſted, that previous to a concluſion blood ſhould be drawn either from one party or the other; after which, he that was wounded might proceed or deſiſt at his option.

Matters

Matters being thus ſettled, and the diſtance between us marked out by our ſeconds, my antagoniſt bid me fire firſt, conſidering himſelf as the aggreſſor. I heſitated, and left the deciſion to our ſeconds, who gave it in my favour. I then preſented my piſtol, levelling it at his thigh, and according to my intention, hit him a little above his right knee; but without diſabling him in the leaſt. He then diſcharged his piſtol, the ball of which grazed my ſide, with very little hurt. Neither of our ſecond ſhots took place.

I then propoſed to let the matter drop, as we had both loſt blood. The ſeconds alſo interfered, urging that we had acquitted ourſelves like men of the

ſtricteſt

ſtricteſt honour. But my antagoniſt alledging that it was unmanly to give over for what he called a mere ſcratch, perſiſted ſo firmly in a determination to exchange two more ſhot, that on his promiſing to give over then at all events, we proceeded to load our piſtols again. I now reſolutely determined that he ſhould give the firſt fire: he did it accordingly, but without execution: I then fired, but with as little.

It gave me great pleaſure to think that we were got ſo far without having done each other any material miſchief; and I ſtood compoſedly to receive his fire, as it was now his turn. But a debate aroſe, who ſhould give it firſt of

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the two. I argued that it was cuſtomary to fire by turns; but he alledged, that as the challenger, he had already tranſgreſſed the rule in firing the firſt of the two ſecond ſhots, which was my indiſputable right, and which he was bound in duty to reſtore to me.

We again applied to our ſeconds, who coincided with his reaſons. In compliance with their determination I diſcharged my piſtol, which did execution indeed. Contrary to my expectation, the ball entered his right hip, though I had aimed as I thought much lower: he fell to the ground, and exclaimed that he was grievouſly wounded.

The

The moment I heard this expreſſion, the conſequences that might follow ſtruck me with inexpreſſible concern. I ran to him, lamenting in the bittereſt terms the misfortune that had befallen him, and of which I was ſo unhappy as to have been the inſtrument; though, added I, you well know how unwillingly. My dear friend, ſaid he, I alone am to be blamed; whatever befalls me is of my own ſeeking.

We raiſed him from the ground, and carried him to an inn that ſtood upon French ground. Here, after having examined his wound, the ſurgeon ſhook his head, and taking me apart, told me that unleſs he was greatly miſtaken,

miſtaken, it would prove mortal; adviſing me, if I had any apprehenſions, to provide for my ſafety: but as none except ourſelves and ſeconds were preſent at the tranſaction, and it had taken place on Auſtrian ground, I thought there was no neceſſity for abſconding.

At the expiration of three days, notwithſtanding the care and attention of the ſurgeon, who was a very ſkilful man in his profeſſion, the wound began to mortify, and two days after my unhappy rival died in our arms, with the moſt manly reſignation to his fate.

The

The ſurgeon, who was a Scotch gentleman of much good breeding, and great good ſenſe and humanity, gave me a very favourable account of the deceaſed. He did not, he aſſured me, know a more good-natured and peaceable man in the regiment, where he was much beloved, and would be much lamented.

This character affected me ſo powerfully, that I became inconſolable for what I had done; and almoſt wiſhed I had reſigned the lady that had occaſioned ſo much calamity, to the pretenſions of my rival.

CHAPTER XIII.

CONCLUSION OF THE FOREGOING STORY.

AFTER conſulting with my friend the officer what was proper to be done, it was thought moſt adviſeable not to return to Bruſſels, leſt I ſhould expoſe myſelf to a proſecution, as the act had been committed upon Auſtrian ground. Taking leave therefore of the ſurgeon, whom we left to do the needful

needful with the remains of the unhappy gentleman, we ſtruck further into France, taking the road to Valenciennes, where we arrived that night.

From this place I wrote to my aunt a circumſtantial account of this melancholy affair; the grief proceeding from which began to affect me in ſo alarming a manner, that my companion began to fear it would derange my mental faculties. I was often calling upon the deceaſed for his forgiveneſs, and expoſtulating for the unreaſonableneſs of compelling me to be his murderer. The diſtractedneſs of my mind terminated at laſt in a very violent fever. I lay delirious during ſeveral days, and

my friend more than once deſpaired of my recovery.

After ſuffering a long and ſevere illneſs, which equally ſhook my body and mind, the ſtrength of my conſtitution enabled me at laſt to overcome this dangerous trial. But I found myſelf no longer the ſame perſon: though I recovered my health, I beheld all things in quite another light than heretofore; I had loſt all reliſh for the world, and felt even no remnant of the attachment I had ſo warmly profeſſed for my miſtreſs. I could not indeed recall her to my mind, without reflecting on the terrible conſequences of my acquaintance with her. This

reflection

reflection became gradually ſo keen and pungent, that I determined at laſt to baniſh her entirely from my thoughts, and to give up all ideas of forming a connexion, which I ſhould ever after conſider as having been purchaſed by murder. This was too heavy a price to pay for a union of which I was no longer deſirous.

Fearing that were I to indulge thoſe various conſiderations, they might occaſion a relapſe, my friend, who was a man of great ſagacity, adviſed me to retire for a while to a ſmall patrimony he had on the confines of Champain; and of which his brother, who was rector of the ſpot where it lay, had the management.

To this place we both repaired accordingly. Through the friendly and edifying diſcourſes of this worthy eccleſiaſtic I gradually regained the tranquillity to which I had long been a ſtranger. Committing myſelf to the mercy of Providence, I reſolved to atone by the ſincerity of my repentance and the regularity of my future life, for the crime of which I had the misfortune to be guilty.

Among the occaſional viſitors of this pious gentleman, was a venerable Capuchin, who having lived many years in the army, had at length quitted it, in order to ſpend the remainder of his life in exerciſes of devotion. Under the coarſe habit of his order he preſerved

ſerved however an air of breeding and politeneſs that quickly diſcovered the man of the world. His language indicated how much he had been converſant in genteel ſociety; and his temper was ſo agreeable, that he was no leſs beloved than reſpected by thoſe who knew him.

With this truly reverend gentleman I contracted an acquaintance that ſoon ripened into a cloſe intimacy. His character and mine correſponded in a very particular manner. He had, like me, been engaged in a variety of adventures. Like me too, he had formerly had the misfortune of killing a man; but his caſe was more favoura-

ble to his conſcience than mine, as he had been obliged, by the violence of his aggreſſor, to act in his own defence. Actuated by the contrition he felt for the irregularities he had committed in the ſeaſon of youth and gaiety, he he took the determination to expiate them, by dedicating his latter days to penance and mortification.

As the world had loſt all charms for me, I began to harbour an idea of imitating the example of this gentleman, who I thought had much leſs reaſon to blame himſelf on account of the unfortunate accident for which he often expreſſed ſo much ſorrow, than I had, who had premeditatedly, and in cool

cool blood, been the inſtrument of another man's death, though, ſtrictly ſpeaking, it was unintentionally.

After pondering ſome time on this deſign, I diſcloſed it to three of my friends, the officer, the rector his brother, and the Capuchin. The firſt would have diſſuaded me from a variety of motives; the principal of them was my time of life, which he thought obliged me to an active line, and by no means juſtified the burying myſelf alive in a convent. My anſwer to this was, that I felt an invincible repugnance to return to the gaieties of life; and that I was perſuaded I could be of more utility to ſociety, from which

I did not mean to ſeclude myſelf by the vocation I had in view, than by remaining a man of the world; a ſituation for which I did not think myſelf any longer qualified, by the change in my diſpoſition, and the ideas by which I now was governed.

The rector and the Capuchin approved entirely of my reaſonings, aſſuring me that a perſon of my diſpoſition and qualifications might be rendered highly uſeful in many reſpects: the liberal education I had received would fit me completely to appear in the character of a preacher, for which I was otherwiſe particularly adapted by my knowledge of the world.

Encouraged by their repreſentations, but prompted chiefly by my own deſires, I finally determined to aſſume the habit you ſee upon me. After the year of my noviciate was completed, I made the uſual vows, and am happy to ſay that I have enjoyed more ſerenity ſince that event, than I had done many years before.

I did not however quit the world in a churliſh moroſe manner, as if I hated thoſe whom I left in it. I wrote to my father, uncle, and aunt, a true and exact account of the ſtate of my mind; and made them ſenſible that I could be happy in no other condition of life than that which I had

choſen. I left the property I was poſſeſſed of, and whatever elſe they had intended for me, to be divided at their diſcretion between my two brothers and my aunt's daughters; requiring only a moderate ſum of money; which they kindly remitted me; and which was diſtributed to the poor families of the diſtrict where our convent lies, a few days before I took my final vows.

Thus, my dear ladies, I have gratified the very natural curioſity you expreſſed to be acquainted with the ſtory of a perſon, whom, as being your countryman, you was pleaſed to honour with your notice.

In

In the courſe of my narrative, I have, ſaid he, been very circumſtantial in that part which lies heavieſt upon my memory, and gives me the higheſt concern. My motive for ſo doing was to make, if poſſible, an indelible impreſſion upon your minds of the dreadful effects reſulting from the fatal prejudices that govern the conduct of mere men of the world on certain occaſions.

We thanked him for the condeſcenſion he had ſhewn in the politeſt terms we could deviſe; but could not allow that he had done juſtice to ſociety, in depriving it of a gentleman, whom, without flattery,

flattery, we conſidered as eminently calculated to form one of its brighteſt ornaments. We ſincerely approved of the ſorrow he felt for the unhappy tranſaction into which he had been drawn by the raſhneſs of his competitor; but did not ſee the neceſſity of his puniſhing himſelf with ſo much ſeverity for the fault of another.

As to ſociety, my dear ladies, I am not, replied he, debarred of that where I can do any good. I am admitted into many pulpits; where I entertain a well-founded hope that I benefit my audience, as it is generally compoſed of well-meaning people, who ſeek for inſtruction without too much refinement.

ment. I am alſo welcomed into ſeveral genteel families, who are not unwilling to liſten to my converſation. As I am not a ſtranger to what is denominated the polite world, I endeavour to frame it, ſo as to render it palatable as well as inſtructive to people of that deſcription, who are always the moſt difficult to pleaſe, and muſt for that reaſon be carefully humoured.

I am now, continued he, arrived at this hoſpitable houſe, on a viſit to the two gentlemen who ſat out yeſterday for the French army. It pains me to loſe, in this unexpected manner, the pleaſure I promiſed myſelf in their company, with which I have the honour of being frequently favoured, whenever

I come

I come into this part of the province. This I generally do in the ſpring and autumn, it being then my turn to preach in this diſtrict.

On our expreſſing a deſire to hear him, he anſwered that on the morrow, which was Sunday, he ſhould perform that duty in the pariſh church; adding, very politely, that he ſhould eſteem our preſence an additional honour to that he received from the many perſons of diſtinction who uſually favoured him with their company.

We repaired accordingly to church on the next day. It afforded us no ſmall ſatisfaction to ſee one of our countrymen ſo much followed and applauded

applauded. The number of coaches was ſurprizing, conſidering that Rheims was diſtant ſix miles, and that they came almoſt all from that city.

He delivered a plain but pathetic diſcourſe on the neceſſity of mutual forgiveneſs, and ſuppreſſing the violence of the paſſions of anger and pride. His language was remarkably clear and intelligible; his manner of reaſoning, though ſimple, extremely forcible. One might eaſily diſcover that he adapted himſelf to the underſtanding of the meaneſt capacity; and that it was evidently in his power to ſuit himſelf, if it were neceſſary, to an audience of the moſt refined taſte.

He

He dined with the family of our two friends that day, where he received the compliments of all preſent on the excellent ſermon he had given them, with a modeſty the more graceful, as it was unaffected and unfeigned.

There were preſent at dinner beſides the family, two gentlemen and two ladies from Rheims; to whom it ſeems the canon had mentioned the arrival of two Engliſh ladies, whom their curioſity prompted them to ſee.

CHAP-

CHAPTER XIV.

COLONEL MORRISON GOES IN SEARCH OF THE YOUNG LADIES—HIS CONVERSATION WITH THE MAJOR.

THOUGH our time did not ſit heavily upon us, as the old lady and the two ſiſters contrived all in their power to make it paſs agreeably, yet both Miſs Brenton and myſelf were equally uneaſy at our total ignorance

rance of what was doing in our family, which we knew was either arrived at, or on its way to Bruſſels. In the hurry with which we had written our letter from the inn to Mrs. Morriſon, we had mentioned neither the place we were at, nor the names of the two gentlemen. The conſequence was that the poſt-mark of Guiſe being on the letter, it was concluded we were at that place.

Our abſence had been ſoon noticed at Mrs. Morriſon's, where the company were waiting our return to tea. As we did not appear, that lady fearing ſome accident might have befallen us, diſpatched ſeveral perſons in queſt of us; but as we could not be found

and it was grown quite dark, the anxiety of that lady was become unſpeakable.

She repaired to the convent, and acquainted the Lady Prioreſs with what had happened. They both agreed, for the preſervation of our honour, it ſhould be given out that Mrs. Morriſon had at laſt found us at a houſe where ſhe ſometime viſited, and where by miſtake ſhe had forgotten ſhe was to ſpend the evening; that Mrs. Brenton arriving in the mean time from England, and calling at her houſe, ſhe had together with us waited upon that lady, as ſoon as ſhe was informed of her arrival.

But

But though this might prevent any further notice or enquiry in conſequence of our abſence, it could not quiet the minds of thoſe two ladies. They could not help jointly concluding that we had eloped with ſome lovers; which was indeed the moſt natural concluſion they could form. They ſpent the next day together in great diſquietude, not knowing where to reſume their enquiries; nor thinking it indeed diſcreet to make any, for fear of exciting ſuſpicions.

After three days of the utmoſt agitation and anxiety upon our account, they received at length our letter from the inn. Though their joy was very great at

at being apprized of our ſafety, their aſtoniſhment at the adventure that had befallen us, was ſuch as to occaſion at firſt ſome doubts of its veracity; which nothing but their high opinion of our diſcretion and integrity was able to remove.

In what manner to proceed was now the queſtion. Colonel Morriſon, who luckily was at Bruſſels, undertook immediately to go in queſt of us. His delicacy reſpecting our character was ſuch, that he ſat out unaccompanied by any ſervant, and travelled with ſuch ſpeed, as not to allow himſelf a moment's reſt till he came to Guiſe.

Here

Here however his inquiries were fruitleſs for two whole days, though he rode to every place in the neighbourhood where he thought there was the leaſt chance for intelligence. He had almoſt given up all hopes, when calling for refreſhment at an inn, he heard a man ſay that he never had ſeen two ſuch handſome young ladies in his life. His attention was immediately rouzed by theſe words. Entering into converſation with the perſon who ſpoke them, he found by his means the inn at which we had breakfaſted the morning after we had been carried off. Hither he haſted with all poſſible diligence. As both our gentlemen were known here, he now diſcovered

covered who they were, and eaſily traced them all the way they had travelled, to the inn where they ſtopped at night, and from whence they had conducted us next morning to their family ſeat.

Colonel Morriſon's impatience to ſee us was ſuch, that without tarrying there an inſtant longer than was neceſſary to refreſh himſelf a few hours, after the exceſſive fatigue he had undergone, he mounted his horſe, though it was a very tempeſtuous evening, and arrived at the ſeat juſt as they were on the point of ſhutting the gate.

As he came unattended and it was very dark, the ſervant who was employed in ſhutting the gate, told him

that it was too late to admit him at ſuch an hour, as the family were preparing to go to reſt. He anſwered in a ſtern voice—Tell your maſter that Colonel Morriſon is here, and wiſhes to ſpeak with him directly.

The diſcourſe between the Colonel and the ſervant having brought another ſervant who had overheard it to the gate, the colonel repeated his meſſage with the ſame ſternneſs, and bid one of them go inſtantly and deliver it.

They both anſwered that he had received orders to ſet out for Germany four days before, and had been obliged to comply with them immediately.

The

The colonel insisted that was highly improbable, as he had been informed that he had lately passed through Brussels, in returning from the French army, to pass the winter in France. The servants acknowledged that was very true; but that the very next day after his arrival home, he had been summoned away by an express sent after him for that purpose.

While this conversation was holding at the gate, the major coming to the hall door that fronted the yard, and hearing an angry voice insisting upon admittance, sent a servant to inquire who it was. On being informed it was a person who called himself a colonel, he bethought himself it might

be ſome affairs relating to the ſervice that brought him, and inferred from his eagerneſs to ſee his nephew, that it muſt at the ſame time be of ſome importance. In conſequence of this idea, he gave orders for his immediate admittance, and received him at the hall door with great politeneſs, deſiring him to walk in, and very reſpectfully aſking him, whether the buſineſs he had with his nephew, who was on his way to the French army, was of a nature to be communicated to any perſon but himſelf.

The colonel caſting a ſevere and frowning look about him, made anſwer that he was extremely ſorry his nephew ſhould have impoſed ſuch a taſk upon

upon his hands as that which had brought him to France. Sir, ſaid he, raiſing his voice, Was not your nephew accompanied by another officer, and did they not carry off two young ladies with them, who are now in this houſe?

Notwithſtanding the major poſſeſſed great natural intrepidity, the manner and ſuddenneſs of the queſtion, his miſtake reſpecting the colonel's errand, together with the conſciouſneſs of his nephew's miſbehaviour, had ſuch an effect upon him, that he turned pale, and heſitated at firſt what anſwer to make. Colonel Morriſon ſeeing his embarraſſment—Sir, ſaid he, I perceive that I am well founded in my demand,

ſince it puzzles even a brave man, as I doubt not you are, how to make a reply to my queſtion.

The colonel might well preſume the major to be a man of bravery. He carried it in his countenance; his perſon was tall; he had a noble and reſolute mien; and the croſs of St. Lewis which he wore, was a ſufficient badge, together with the loſs of his leg, that he had been a valiant ſoldier.

When he had recollected himſelf from the ſurprize into which he was thrown by the unexpectedneſs of the queſtion—Sir, ſaid he, to the colonel, you judge rightly of the concern I feel

feel for the unjuſtifiable conduct of my nephew. That alone, be perſuaded, is the cauſe of my heſitation. But after you have honoured me with your attention to the account I ſhall give you of this unhappy affair, I flatter myſelf then, angry as you are, and have moſt certainly ſufficient cauſe to be, it may not prove impoſſible for us to part upon better terms than we meet.

I wiſh, anſwered the colonel, that ſuch a thing may be practicable, for the ſake of all who have been concerned in this buſineſs. It carries with it, in the mean time, ſuch a ſuſpicious appearance, that I cannot help thinking

you will find much difficulty in clearing it up to my ſatisfaction.

I do not deſpair, replied the major, of giving you the ſatisfaction to which you are ſo juſtly entitled. I will begin by informing you that both the young ladies are in this houſe, under the care of my ſiſter-in-law, and my protection. They have been treated with all the reſpect to which their merit entitles them; and, ſaving the action of taking them away by compulſion, which I condemn with as much wrath and reſentment as you can do, nothing has been omitted that could ſhew the higheſt regard for their character.

He

He then proceeded to the whole narrative of what had happened from the firſt moment of our ſeizure in the Park; which agreeing with every circumſtance mentioned in our letter as far as it went, ſeemed to give ſome ſatisfaction to the colonel. But when he came to that part of the ſtory relating to the behaviour of our lovers on their being obliged to quit us—Sir, ſaid he to the colonel, though I flatter myſelf that my word would be ſufficient, I will produce ſuch vouchers for all I am going to ſay, as muſt convince you that my nephew and his friend, though hurried away by the blindneſs of their paſſion into a moſt unjuſtifiable deed, ſtill de-

ſerve to be conſidered as men of the nobleſt ſentiments.

He then went up ſtairs to his apartment, and taking the packets out of his bureau, brought them to the colonel, deſiring him to peruſe the writings, and examine the other contents.

After a few moments ſilence, he continued his recital, informing the colonel, with the higheſt expreſſions of his eſteem and admiration for Miſs Brenton and me, in what manner we had refuſed to accept of any of theſe donations. He concluded by ſaying, that notwithſtanding the inexcuſeable means employed to carry us off, the whole

whole of this extraordinary adventure had been productive of ſo many proofs of the magnanimity of all parties concerned, and ſuch a ſeries of exalted behaviour, that were he the father of the young ladies, he would forgive what was paſt, were it only for the opportunity that had been afforded them, of diſplaying the greatneſs of their character to ſo much advantage.

Colonel Morriſon heard the narration out with great attention. When it was finiſhed—Sir, ſaid he to the old officer, I came to this houſe with the moſt violent projects of vengeance; but I muſt confeſs that you have diſarmed me. It would be unjuſt not to acknow-

ledge the generoſity of your nephew and his friend, but I ſtill conſider them as guilty of having violated the laws of hoſpitality, and myſelf as bound in honour to exact a due reparation from them.

The nicety of your feelings, replied the major, is an indication how much right you have to demand a compliance with every requeſt you can make, as I am perſuaded you will make none that is unreaſonable. Now, Sir, I that am as jealous of my nephew's honour and mine as you can be of your's, do engage that he and his friend ſhall formally aſk forgiveneſs of your lady and yourſelf, for the breach

of

of duty and reſpect due to you both, rejecting their fault on the ungovernableneſs of their paſſion, and the deprivation of their reaſon, when they committed it.

The colonel, who poſſeſſed as large a fund of good-nature as of bravery, received this apology with apparent ſatisfaction; adding however, that he left it to the conſideration of him who made it, whether it appeared ſo ſufficient that he would accept of it were it his own caſe.

Yes, anſwered the major; and to remove all ſcruples, I will ſubſcribe this opinion with my name; after which I hope that you will not refuſe

to ſhake hands with me, ſit down to ſupper, and take up your lodging here to-night.

The hearty frankneſs with which the old gentleman ſpoke theſe words, produced a ſmile from the colonel: he told him that he would accede to his terms; upon which the major immediately drew up a declaration conformable to his promiſe, which he delivered to the colonel, ſummoning him to perform his part of the agreement; upon which the colonel taking him by the hand—Sir, ſaid he, let us be thankful that this meeting terminates ſo differently from what I firſt apprehended.

They

They now sat down cordially to table. As the colonel was, like his new friend, of an open, candid disposition, the reconciliation that had taken place was followed by a mutual communication of the most remarkable passages of their lives; and as neither of them were enemies to a chearful glass, it was late before they parted.

CHAP-

CHAPTER XV.

INTERVIEW OF COLONEL MORRISON WITH THE YOUNG LADIES.

EARLY in the morning our Engliſh attendant knocked at our door. This we looked upon as a ſignal of ſome news relating to us. She informed us that an elderly officer-like gentleman, was arrived, who had found ſome difficulty in procuring admittance at firſt; but that he and the major, after a long

a long converſation, had ſupped together in the hall, and that neither of them were yet ſtirring.

Both Miſs Brenton and I were equally alarmed at the firſt mention of the ſtranger, whom we immediately conjectured to be Colonel Morriſon. It was with heartfelt joy we found by the ſequel of her diſcourſe, that in all probability matters would be ſettled amicably, or at leaſt in ſuch a manner as not to involve the parties on either ſide in dangerous conſequences.

We felt nevertheleſs much uneaſineſs at the thoughts of appearing before the colonel. Though conſcious of our inno-

innocence, we were not clear that he might not ſuſpect ſome connivance on our ſide; the rather, as in our written account we had ſpoken in the moſt favourable terms of the reſpectfulneſs of the behaviour of our two lovers, ſubſequent to their firſt carrying us off. Miſs Brenton however preſerved her ſpirits better than I did: the truth was, ſhe had made up her mind, whereas mine was agitated with doubt and ſuſpence.

When we came into the breakfaſt-room, we obſerved that our good lady and the two ſiſters ſeemed in great perplexity; at which we teſtified the more ſurprize, as from what

our

our attendant had told us, Colonel Morriſon and the major ſeemed to have parted on a friendly footing the preceding night, and had not ſeen each other ſince. But we ſoon found the cauſe of their trouble to proceed from another ſource. The canon had written them a letter, which they had juſt received. The purport of it was to let them know, that while the two Engliſh Proteſtant ladies remained at his nephew's houſe, he would never ſet his foot in it; and that if the connexion between them was not immediately ſet aſide, he would diſpoſe of his property in favour of other perſons.

The

The old lady ſhewed us the letter, inveighing bitterly againſt the writer, but proteſting that had he ten times more property to leave her ſon, ſhe had rather ſee him without it than without me, who was infinitely the dearer treaſure both to him and to herſelf. She added at the ſame time, that ſhe was happy to be able to give this freſh proof of her regard for me to the gentleman that was arrived, as it would be an additional motive to obtain his forgiveneſs for what was paſt, and his acquieſcence in the deſires of her family.

While we were diſcourſing on this ſubject, the major entered the room, and

and preſented Colonel Morriſon to the old lady, who received him with many expreſſions of reſpect. After bowing to the company, he caſt a look of great ſympathy and affection upon Miſs Brenton and me. He took us by the hand, and embracing us with tears in his eyes—I congratulate myſelf, ſaid he, for having found you in ſo worthy a family; I congratulate them for the acquiſition they have made of ſuch an ornament and bleſſing to it; and I congratulate you, my dear young ladies, for the diſcreet conduct, and the noble ſpirit you have diſplayed throughout the whole of this extraordinary affair.

After

After paying this compliment to the assembly, he very politely enquired after our two absent friends; observing however that from what was publicly said, a winter campaign was expected in Germany.

This intelligence was far from displeasing to me, who wished that a sufficient interval might elapse before the return of my French lover, to decide whether I could bestow myself upon him with propriety, and future tranquillity of mind.

But the sensations of Miss Brenton I could discern to be very different from mine: her beautiful complexion under-

underwent an immediate change upon hearing this news, and ſhe betrayed an alarm that was very viſible to thoſe who obſerved her.

When breakfaſt was over, Colonel Morriſon was left with Miſs Brenton and me.—Let us all rejoice, were his firſt words, that this ſtrange adventure is like to end ſo auſpiciouſly. It is more than I expected when I left Bruſſels. But, my dear ladies, be ingenuous upon this occaſion; and tell me ſincerely your wiſhes and inclinations. Does your choice fall voluntarily and without conſtraint upon the two gentlemen who took you away from us?

Have

Have they made captives of your hearts as well as of your perſons? If ſo, this adventure is a ſtrange one indeed, and deſerves to be recorded as truly uncommon. Should your motives for complying with their deſires prove however of another kind,—ſhould the apprehenſion of having forfeited your reputation prompt you to throw yourſelves into their arms, as the only refuge left you,—let me, in ſuch a caſe, adviſe you by no means, to take ſuch a ſtep. It is dictated by inexperience and deſpair; and will bring repentance with it at laſt. Where the mind is ſpotleſs, men of ſenſe regard not the accidents that may befal your ſex; and you need

need not apprehend that ſuch men will be ſo blind to ſuch exterior perfection, and internal excellence as your's, as to overlook them on account of an adventure to which your charms have given riſe, and which only the moſt lovely of your ſex could be liable to experience.

This kind and flattering diſcourſe, as it deſerved, ſo it met with our grateful thanks. Encouraged by his paternal ſolicitude, I ventured to unfold the true ſtate of my mind to him: I told him what indeed he was not ignorant of, that there was an Engliſh gentleman of his acquaintance, one whom he much admired, for whom I could not deny a partiality.

But that he was a perſon of ſo much delicacy in his ſentiments, that I much dreaded he would be ſo diſguſted at what had happened, as to drop all thoughts of me.

Do you believe he ever had a real paſſion for you? ſaid the colonel haſtily: I do indeed, was my reply; and that it was not poſſible for him to have a greater, if I may judge from every ſymptom that characterizes love. Then, my dear lady, ſaid he, do not fear that he will forſake you for what has happened. A man of a gallant diſpoſition will always love his miſtreſs the better for preſerving her attachment to him in ſpite of ſuch a trial as you have undergone.

Theſe

These words of Colonel Morrison gave me such comfort and courage, that I instantly resolved to indulge those hopes of Mr. Villars which I had almost lost. In the mean time, turning to Miss Brenton — My dear young lady, said the colonel, I fancy that the admonitions I have given to your fair friend, have no reference to you. I could perceive by the change of your colour, when I had mentioned a winter campaign, that your heart is really interested in favour of your French lover. If I am not deceived, he is, allowing for the wildness of his passion for you, a deserving gentleman. To do justice to both, they are men of honour; and their generous treat-

ment of you atones amply, in my opinion, for the meaſures they took reſpecting you, however theſe were wrong and inexcuſeable.

He then aſked us whether we intended to remain with this family, till the return of the two gentlemen from the army. Here, I replied, lay the main difficulty with me. My aunt was daily expected when we were carried off, and might be now arrived. She would probably be accompanied by Mr. Villars, as well as my brother, and notwithſtanding the light in which this affair might be repreſented, that gentleman would not, certainly, be pleaſed at my voluntary abſence, while I knew

I knew that the only motive of his coming over to Bruſſels, was the expectation of ſeeing me.

Were I, on the other hand, to quit the family of my French admirer, I ſhuddered to think of the conſequences. He had, during the laſt campaign, from the deſpair of obtaining me, expoſed himſelf to continual dangers. This, I frankly confeſſed, had made a powerful impreſſion upon me; and had ſo far endeared him to me, that I thought myſelf bound, in default of Mr. Villars, who had a prior right to my attachment, to prefer him to all other men.

Theſe ſentiments, the colonel ſaid, were highly laudable, and he entirely approved of the regard I entertained for my French lover: but in the mean time ſome expedient muſt be found to preſerve my character in a fair light with Mr. Villars, to whom, as I gave the preference from inclination no leſs than duty, I ought to appear irreproachable in my conduct.

He told us that he had written that morning to Mrs. Morriſon a full account of all things concerning us, and that he had, at the requeſt of the major, promiſed to give him his company till an anſwer came.

At

At the expiration of a week, the colonel received a letter from his lady, acquainting him that Mrs. Brenton was juſt arrived; but that neither Mr. Villars, nor my brother, had been able to accompany her: the firſt had been obliged to go over to Ireland to inſpect his uncle's eſtates; and the ſecond was detained in London by the neceſſity of ſettling ſome affairs relating to his father's partnerſhip in the city.

However I might have been pleaſed with the ſight of my brother and Mr. Villars, I conſidered their abſence at this time as a relief from much anxiety and vexation, which their preſence would have neceſſarily occaſioned. Colonel

Morriſon was of the ſame opinion; and now thought that he might, without impropriety, reſign us to the care of our good mother, as Madam Tavannes called herſelf.

On leaving us, he promiſed that he would conſult with Mrs. Morriſon which would be moſt adviſeable of the two, whether to induce Mrs. Brenton to remain with them at Bruſſels, or to pay us a viſit. This depended upon ſo many contingencies, that he judged it wiſeſt to ſuſpend all determination on this point till circumſtances pointed to a deciſion.

CHAP-

CHAPTER XVI.

DEATH OF ONE OF THE FRENCH OFFICERS — MISS WOODVILLE AND MISS BRENTON RETURN TO BRUSSELS.

ABOUT a week after he was gone, Miſs Brenton came to me one morning, as I was ſitting alone in our apartment amuſing myſelf with a French book. The dejectedneſs with which

ſhe accoſted me, portended ſome diſagreeable news.—There, Auguſta, ſaid ſhe, read a mother's and an aunt's peremptory commands. Mrs. Brenton had written to her, by no means to encourage the addreſſes of her French admirer; as ſhe had a more ſuitable match in view for her at home. This we both directly conjectured was my brother; but we knew at the ſame time that Miſs Villars had long been his flame, and that Mr. Villars warmly favoured his addreſſes. This conjecture ſerved however to quiet Miſs Brenton's apprehenſions, not doubting that when her mother found he was otherwiſe engaged, ſhe would not oppoſe her preſent inclinations. The admo-

admonition addreſſed to me in the ſame letter was preciſely of the ſame import. It went even further than a mere prohibition; it glanced at my oblivion of a perſon who, ſhe had always believed, ſtood higheſt of any man in my affections; and whom I ſhould not better myſelf by forſaking. She informed us, that what with the fatigue of her journey, what with the trouble of mind ſhe had ſuffered on our joint account, ſhe was much indiſpoſed; but intended as ſoon as ſhe was able to travel, to come in queſt of us with Colonel Morriſon, who had offered her his company.

The contents of this letter were exceſſively diſagreeable to us both. For the firſt time in our lives we were not diſpleaſed at her inability to undertake the journey ſhe meditated, and which we were perſuaded was needleſs; as the match ſhe had projected for her daughter could never take place, and as I needed not to be reminded of Mr. Villars, to whom my attachment remained inviolate.

We remained above a fortnight in a ſtate of ſuſpence, expecting every day to ſee Mrs. Brenton. We began at laſt, from our ſincere affection for her, to be uneaſy at neither ſeeing, nor hearing from her, not knowing to what

what cauſe to attribute her ſilence or her abſence.

Our impatience was attended with the utmoſt alarm upon her account, when we were releaſed from our fears by the receipt of a letter, by which we learned that Mrs. Brenton having been entruſted by a lady of her acquaintance with a daughter, whom ſhe was to place in a convent; the latter had been taken ſo ill, that ſhe had not been willing to leave her; and had deſired Mrs. Morriſon, the writer of the letter, to inform us of the cauſe of her detention, leſt we ſhould be uneaſy at her not coming according to her intention.

This

This information reſtored tranquillity to our minds, which had been ſo violently agitated by our apprehenſions, that Madam Tavannes and the whole family felt the deepeſt concern, and were continually employed in adminiſtering comfort to us, and ſympathiſing with our affliction.

But, alas! this worthy family had ſoon occaſion for the compaſſion and ſympathy of all who had the happineſs of their acquaintance. Three or four days after hearing from Mrs. Brenton, another letter was brought while we were at dinner. It was directed to the major, and ſealed with black.

black. On breaking it open I could obſerve his hand to tremble. The ſuperſcription was immediately known by Mademoiſelle Chabort to be the hand of her brother. Heavens! ſaid ſhe, turning to Mademoiſelle Tavannes, I hope there is no bad news, my dear friend. The major, as he read the letter, turned pale, and as ſoon as he had finiſhed it, burſt into a flood of tears. Turning to me, he took me tenderly by the hand, preſſed it to his cheek, ſaying—Ah! Madam, you have loſt———He could ſay no more; the tears again guſhed out, and he was obliged to have recourſe to his handkerchief.

There

There was no further neceſſity to ſpecify the melancholy tidings; every one felt what they muſt be. Madam Tavannes looking moſt afflictedly at the major——He ſhook his head, and wrung his hands with inexpreſſible grief——The good old lady exclaimed—My ſon! my dear ſon!—and fell back ſpeechleſs. Mademoiſelle Tavannes had juſt ſtrength to fling herſelf upon her knees beſide her mother's chair, and fainted away immediately.

Theſe two excepted, it was difficult in this ſcene of affliction to tell who underwent the greateſt ſufferings: we were all ſo deeply ſtruck, that we were hardly able to beſtow proper atten-

attention on Madam Tavannes and her daughter. We carried them, with the help of attendants, to their bed-chamber, where we ſat round them in tears and lamentation.

They both lay motionleſs and deprived of all ſenſe for a long time, during which the alarm of all the people in the houſe, and the concern they all expreſſed, were an ample teſtimony how dearly this worthy family was beloved.

Mademoiſelle Chabort with Miſs Brenton and me hung round the major as if he had been our father. Next to the mother and daughter, he wanted

wanted indeed moſt conſolation. He loved his nephew like his own child; he had been the guide and companion of his youth in the field of honour; it was fighting by his ſide that he loſt his limb, and he had on that occaſion experienced his utmoſt care and tenderneſs. After his retreat from the ſervice in conſequence of that accident, he had met with every grateful return of kindneſs that his noble-minded pupil could beſtow. To loſe ſuch a nephew, in a career that opened ſuch proſpects of ſucceſs in his profeſſion, was a blow which age and fondneſs were incapable of ſupporting, and which nearly ſunk him to the grave.

My

My feelings were ſo acute at this unexpected cataſtrophe, that they were a matter of ſurprize to Miſs Brenton, who concluded that I was much more enamoured with Monſ. Tavannes than I thought proper to acknowledge. The fact was, that when I reflected on the unbounded tokens of his love, I could not help deploring the loſs of a man to whom I was ſo dear, and whom I was well convinced no one would ever exceed in the warmth and ſincerity of his attachment.

Miſs Brenton, to whom Mademoiſelle Chabort, after the firſt emotions of ſorrow were over, communicated the contents of her brother's letter,

letter, informed me that Monſ. Tavannes received a mortal wound in a ſkirmiſh, the next day of his arrival at the quarters where his regiment lay. He ſurvived but two days, and his laſt words to Monſ. Chabort were to beg that I would honour him with my remembrance.

After indulging ſome days a grief which was unfeigned, I began at laſt to reflect that the cauſe of perhaps much calamity was removed by this accident. Mr. Villars, on hearing of this affair, would perhaps have thought it incumbent upon him to require the moſt rigorous ſatisfaction. The

point

point of honour would have led him to an eclairciſſement with Monſ. Tavannes, which might have been fatal to one if not to both.

This conſideration operated powerfully towards the recovery of my ſerenity. I now viewed myſelf as one eſcaped from a ſituation that muſt infallibly have been productive of much miſchief. Miſs Brenton was of the ſame opinion, and confeſſed that whatever ſhe had ſaid in order to quiet me, her apprehenſions of what ſhe thought muſt certainly happen gave her perpetual uneaſineſs.

In the mean time Madam Tavannes lay dangerouſly ill. We all attended her with unſpeakable anxiety. Her daughter, though ſhe was better able to bear her loſs, was plunged in the deepeſt melancholy. They both, together with the major, could hardly permit me to be out of their ſight. They ſeemed to look on me as the wife of their beloved colonel, and to have given me his place in their affections. The unaffected concern I had ſhewn for his fate had highly endeared me to them, and their fondneſs appeared on every occaſion they could find to manifeſt it.

While

While things were in this ſituation, Miſs Brenton received a letter apprizing her that her mother had caught a violent fever, owing to the cloſe attendance ſhe had given to the young lady who was under her care, and for whom ſhe had an uncommon regard. This intelligence was accompanied with notice to hold ourſelves in readineſs for Colonel Morriſon, who would immediately ſet out to conduct us back to Bruſſels.

Both Miſs Brenton and I were ſo truly attached to the family we now lived with, that a ſeparation from them was an idea that afflicted us exceed-

exceedingly. Nothing but the affection we felt for Mrs. Brenton could have reconciled us to a departure from it, and it was with abundance of tears that we ſignified the contents of this letter to the family.

The next day after its receipt Colonel Morriſon arrived in a poſt-chaiſe large enough to hold three. He brought no ſervant with him, as no perſon but his lady and my aunt were to be privy to any part of this buſineſs. We were all the while ſuppoſed to be at the country-houſe of a friend to my aunt.

When the colonel was informed upon his arrival of the accident that had

had befallen the family, notwithſtanding he was duly ſenſible that it would prevent much evil, and deliver me from the diſquietude I muſt have undergone at being, however innocent, the occaſion of it, he expreſſed a real concern for the death of a perſon, whom, though guilty of an inexcuſeable tranſgreſſion, he acknowledged to be a gentleman of the nobleſt character.

He condoled with the major in terms of ſuch feeling and ſympathy as became a ſoldier, whoſe turn it might ſoon be to experience the ſame fate they were now lamenting.

Our parting with this generous family was too affecting for deſcription. Though the abſolute neceſſity of our quitting them was evident, we could not overcome our fears that they would think us too ready to leave them. The good old lady gave us her bleſſing, with a tenderneſs, and at the ſame time a ſolemnity of expreſſion, that equally melted us into grief, and ſtruck us with reſpect. She embraced us with the fondneſs of a mother, bidding us remember how dear we were to the family, and to honour them with our frequent correſpondence. She repeatedly called me her daughter, earneſtly entreating that I would always addreſs her by the appellation of mother.

When

When we had left this worthy lady, her daughter and Mademoiſelle Chabort threw their arms around us, and bedewed our faces with their tears, making us promiſe a faithful performance of Madam Tavannes' injunctions to write to them often. Mademoiſelle Chabort compelled Miſs Brenton to accept of a bracelet, which ſhe took off her arm, with the picture ſet in brilliants of her brother.

The major very reſpectfully requeſted and obtained Colonel Morriſon's permiſſion to preſent us each with a diamond ring of great value. And with a ſoldierly politeneſs deſired his acceptance of a brace of piſtols moſt richly and

curiouſly mounted; telling him that he ſhould henceforth conſider him, as bound to pay many viſits to the houſe he was now leaving, by way of atonement for depriving it of its two brighteſt ornaments.

CHAP.

CHAPTER XVII.

WHAT HAPPENED AT BRUSSELS—MISS WOODVILLE'S BROTHER INTRODUCED—PERPLEXITY OF MISS BRENTON.

ON our arriving at Bruſſels, we waited on the Lady Prioreſs, who wept for joy at ſeeing us. As ſhe was privy to every particular that had befallen us, ſhe congratulated Miſs Brenton on the conqueſt ſhe had made,

but warmly exhorted her to be obedient to her mother. She could not ſufficiently, ſhe ſaid, expreſs the exultation ſhe felt at my being delivered from the cruel dilemma of being held at each hand by two men, one of whom muſt unqueſtionably have been murdered by the other on my account.

Mrs. Brenton was at Mrs. Morriſon's country houſe. Her recovery was very ſlow. She received us like two deſerters, as ſhe called us, gone over to the enemy, and now returned to their colours. The pleaſure ſhe felt at ſeeing us again contributed powerfully to the reſtoration of her health; and it gave Miſs Brenton and me

me no ſmall comfort to find our preſence ſo conducive to her welfare.

A few days after our return, ſhe ſeriouſly demanded of us if we had ever intended to accept of the two gentlemen who carried us off, in quality of huſbands. To this queſtion I replied by faithfully ſtating to her the whole ſeries of my thoughts and determinations previous to the accident that put an end to the affair ſo far as it related to me. She approved of my intentions, and hoped her Nancy would not be leſs diſcreet and prudent than I had been.

Miſs Brenton making no anſwer—By your ſilence, my dear, continued

ſhe, I preſume you are conſenting to my wiſhes. Without diſparaging your French lover, for whoſe character I entertain no manner of diſlike, I think I may promiſe you an Engliſh one by no means his inferior.

Then addreſſing herſelf to me—My dear Auguſta, ſaid ſhe, I doubt not you will join with me in adviſing your couſin to act with the greateſt deliberation in ſo intereſting a matter, and to weigh the difference between a connexion with one's own kindred and a total ſtranger.

Here Miſs Brenton interrupted her. —My dear mother, ſaid ſhe, the perſon whom you ſpeak of is a total ſtranger

ſtranger to me. I have lived ſo long out of England, that I have forgotten every relation I have there, and am perfectly indifferent to every one of them excepting yourſelf.

Far be it from me, my dear Nancy, replied Mrs. Brenton, to force your inclinations. Grant me one requeſt, and I ſhall be ſatisfied. Let me only ſhew you the gentleman I deſign for you, and then refuſe him if you can.

This requeſt was ſo reaſonable, ſaid I, that it cannot be refuſed. What made me ſo quick in giving this anſwer, was that I was almoſt ſure my

brother was the perſon alluded to; and that were it any other, Miſs Brenton would ſtill be at liberty to decline the offer. I knew, as already obſerved, that the firſt was too deeply engaged elſewhere to recede; and Mrs. Brenton, I knew as well, had not fortune enough to tempt either of her ſiſters to bring her daughter into their family.

I was alſo apprehenſive, that Miſs Brenton might betray a prepoſſeſſion for her French lover, which would have created uneaſineſs. This was the ſole caſe in which I ever knew her ſo decided as not to ſuffer contradiction.

She

She quickly perceived my various motives, and kindly thanked me for interfering ſo opportunely. Mrs. Brenton was on the other hand no leſs pleaſed with the reply I had taken upon me to make for her daughter, and we now reſumed our places in her eſteem and good opinion of our diſcretion.

Shortly after our return to Bruſſels, Miſs Brenton received a letter from Mademoiſelle Chabort, informing her that it was not expected her brother would be able to leave the army till late in the winter, if then: that he knew of her departure from Madam Tavannes, but hoped that ſhe

did not mean to abandon him, after the proofs he had given of his honourable intentions.

Mrs. Brenton, who had been apprized of every particular of their behaviour to us, could not deny that both our admirers were men of the ſublimeſt notions. But the circumſtance of their being foreigners operated ſo powerfully againſt them, that all their noble qualities vaniſhed before it. For this reaſon ſhe gave a very cool reception to this letter, and ſtrictly prohibited her daughter from giving any poſitive encouragement to Mr. Chabort.

But

But Miſs Brenton was too reſolutely prejudiced in his favour, to liſten to ſuch a command. She wrote privately to Mademoiſelle Chabort the very reverſe of what had been enjoined her; not doubting that when Mrs. Brenton diſcovered that a match with my brother was impracticable, ſhe would not oppoſe another that was every way ſo advantageous.

In the mean time my brother having finiſhed the ſettlement of thoſe affairs that had detained him at London, came over to Bruſſels. My aunt, who knew nothing of his attachment to Miſs Villars, was overjoyed at the expectation of her being able to bring about a connexion between him and her

her daughter. She did me the honour to conſult me one day upon this ſubject: my anſwer was, that there was no perſon in the world I ſhould be more happy to call my ſiſter than her daughter. I added no more, leaving her to make the diſcovery of what I knew.

My brother informed me that Mr. Villars had earneſtly beſought him to favour his addreſſes to me, and that his anſwer was, that no man ſhould be more agreeable to him as a brother-in-law. He hoped that I would not reject the courtſhip of a gentleman of ſuch tranſcendent merit, and that I would give him all the encouragement which his

his predilection and conſtancy ſo amply deſerved.

The commiſſion my brother was charged with was highly acceptable to me, and I returned him an anſwer conformable to his wiſhes. I then took an opportunity of bringing him to an explanation concerning himſelf. You have, my dear brother, ſaid I, been at the pains of providing me with a bridegroom, I will now ſhew you my gratitude by providing you with a bride.

He ſtarted at theſe words.—I hope, ſaid he, you have not, in your zeal for my welfare, ſtaked my aſſent before

fore obtaining it. I ſmilingly replied, that I reſpected him too much to aſſume ſuch a freedom; but that I was acquainted with a lady for whom he profeſſed the higheſt regard, who would eſteem herſelf greatly honoured by an alliance between him and her daughter.

As my brother's prudence and politeneſs went hand in hand—Tell me not, ſaid he haſtily, who this lady is, that ſhe may not experience the mortification of a refuſal; and that I may not be rendered unhappy by knowing whom I refuſe. Tell her that I am pre-engaged with one to whom I am unalterably devoted.

I had

I had that very day an opportunity of apprizing my aunt and my couſin of what had paſſed between my brother and me. Miſs Brenton confeſſed that ſhe was pleaſed I had kept the name a ſecret, and very much applauded his delicacy. But Mrs. Brenton hardly was perſuaded that he had already made his choice.

Being however a circumſpectful woman, ſhe determined to be convinced of this without committing herſelf. As we were next morning at breakfaſt, ſhe rallied him on his gravity, of which indeed he had more than a neceſſary ſhare, telling him that he muſt caſt off ſome part of it, if he meant

meant to make the conqueſt of a young lady of her acquaintance, whoſe friends were deſirous of ſeeing them united.

He begged her directly not to name her: that with all deference to his well-wiſhers, he thought it would conduce much more to his felicity to be guided by no choice but his own. He added in a jocoſe manner, that poſſibly it was not in his power to return the gift of his heart to any one that might think him worthy of ſuch a compliment.

This reply gave infinite ſatisfaction to Miſs Brenton; and her mother was too

too well bred, and too cautious, to carry the converſation any further.

This lady was now ſo far recovered, that it was thought proper we ſhould return to England. As I had no motive to detain me abroad equal to that which invited me home, I was rather pleaſed with the propoſal. But I was not ſo wrapt up in my own concerns, as to be inſenſible of the repugnance my couſin felt at removing to ſo great a diſtance from her lover. Both ſhe and I ſuſpected that Mrs. Brenton had it in contemplation to break off the connexion with Monſ. Chabort, and were buſy in deviſing means to prevent her intentions, if ſuch they were.

The

The only ſure and deciſive method that occurred to Miſs Brenton, was to fly for protection to Madam Tavannes. This however was a ſtep of which we both ſaw the impracticability: and yet my couſin was fully perſuaded that unleſs ſhe reſolved upon ſuch a meaſure, ſhe muſt bid adieu to her lover. When once in England, ſhe foreſaw that a world of difficulties would ariſe to prevent the accompliſhment of what ſhe ſo ardently wiſhed.

After numberleſs conſultations on this matter, it was thought moſt adviſeable that ſhe ſhould unboſom herſelf to Mrs. Morriſon, and intreat her to mediate in her favour. This lady had been a ſecond mother to Miſs Brenton,

Brenton, and having no children, loved her as if ſhe had been her own.

But when ſhe diſcloſed her mind to this lady, ſhe found that her mother had already pre-occupied her mind with the ſcheme of a very beneficial match in England for her daughter; in conſequence of which that lady, who entertained very ſtrict notions of the obedience due to parents, adviſed her to win her mother's conſent by patience, and ſubmiſſion to the deſire that ſhe expreſſed, that her daughter ſhould at preſent accompany her to England.

Vexed

Vexed at theſe obſtructions, Miſs Brenton began to revolve in her mind in what manner ſhe ſhould obviate her return home. The project of an elopement was again mentioned. Notwithſtanding the dangers attending it, ſhe would have made the attempt, had I not diſſuaded her, aſſuring her at the ſame time, that as ſoon as I became my own miſtreſs, by an union with Mr. Villars, which I had every reaſon to think would ſpeedily take place, I would plead ſo powerfully for her, and prevail upon him to ſecond me ſo effectually, that I doubted not we ſhould be ſucceſsful.

Alas!

Alas! ſaid ſhe, Auguſta, who knows whether this union with Mr. Villars, which as it has your wiſhes, has alſo ſincerely my own, will not take a longer time to accompliſh than is either in his or your expectation. Long and diſtant courtſhips have always been held dangerous; interruptions of various kinds come acroſs them: you have already had three lovers; the one courted you from your infancy, and is now married in the Weſt-Indies; the ſecond was near being taken from you by the intervention of a third; this laſt, who loved you doubtleſs as truly as either of the former, was ſnatched from you by death; and the lover to whom you

now

now return, may be torn from you by ſome caſualty no leſs unexpected.

She ſpoke theſe words with a kind of prophetic vehemence. They made no impreſſion upon me at the time, for which I could not account.

Her warmth ſubſiding, I coolly aſked her what ſhe propoſed to do.—Had your lover been living, ſaid ſhe, and no Mr. Villars exiſted, tell me, Auguſta, with ſincerity, what you would have done yourſelf. As I ſmiled, and heſitated what reply to make—Your heſitation tells me what. You are averſe to acknowledge, ſaid ſhe, but you are too honeſt to deny, that you would have accompanied me in my flight to the

the worthy family to which we both have ſuch obligations, and where we experienced an affection and generoſity, which I wiſh we may never fail of among our own relations.

Miſs Brenton had ſtrong paſſions, but ſhe governed them by the ſuperior ſtrength of her reaſon. Never, but in this ſingle inſtance, did ſhe ever appear to give way to them; but I muſt confeſs that even in this inſtance, her reaſonings in favour of the paſſion ſhe was pleading for, ſtruck me forcibly.

She ſaw the impreſſion they had made upon me, and taking me by the hand, with a look of friendſhip and

confidence that charmed me—My dear Auguſta, ſaid ſhe, I fear we are no leſs linked in adverſity than in friendſhip, unleſs the ſagacity you have often complimented me with is imaginary. I foreſee that whatever deſtiny may await you in England, I ſhall, by conſenting to go there, loſe the moſt valuable prize that perhaps may ever fall to my lot. Diſtance of place will produce inſuperable bars between me and the man who has gained my heart, and we ſhall be deprived of each other for ever.

Experience has ſince taught me, that Miſs Brenton, young as ſhe was, conjectured extremely right. Conſtancy depends upon circumſtances which are by

by no means at our command. Fidelity has often been ſhaken to pieces by the fabricating or falſifying of facts, the truth or falſhood of which it was impoſſible to aſcertain on account of the diſtance from whence they were reported. Lovers, in order to preſerve mutual confidence, ſhould not live remote from each other; as the flame of love is ſoon apt to expire, unleſs it is nouriſhed by frequent perſonal intercourſe.

CHAPTER XVIII.

MISS WOODVILLE RETURNS TO ENGLAND WITH MISS BRENTON, WHO BECOMES HEIRESS TO A LARGE FORTUNE — DISCOURSE BETWEEN THEM UPON THIS OCCASION.

AS after all our conſultations we could hit upon nothing that appeared feaſible, without running ſuch riſks as would expoſe her reputation; and, as ſhe ſat too high a value upon it, to ſuffer

ſuffer any conſideration to enter into competition with ſo indiſpenſible a requiſite in a woman, ſhe reſolved, to uſe her own terms, to ſacrifice her happineſs to her character, and to bid adieu to thoſe pleaſing proſpects that Fortune had only ſhewn to her, to make her the more completely miſerable by ſhutting them up for ever.

Our journey to England was doleful to a degree. When we were on board the packet—I remember, ſaid ſhe, to have read that when the unfortunate Queen Mary, whom our Elizabeth beheaded, took her departure from Calais, ſhe caſt many a wiſhful look back on the French ſhore, de-

ploring the neceſſity of quitting a country where all her happineſs was centered. She left us to make the application, and retiring to the cabin, ſpoke not a word more during the whole paſſage.

On landing at Dover, I was not a little ſurprized to ſee Mr. Villars ſtanding on the beach to receive me. He took me in his arms from thoſe who were carrying me aſhore, and did not ſet me down till he had brought me to ſome diſtance from the water ſide; when he took the liberty of embracing me with the utmoſt fervour and tenderneſs. He welcomed me to my native country in the warmeſt terms

terms of affection, and made me completely ſenſible that his attachment to me was as great as ever.

At the inn to which he conducted us all, we were further ſurprized by the ſight of Miſs Villars, whom he had engaged to accompany him in this excurſion to the ſea ſhore. Thus we were all happy excepting Miſs Brenton, who could not fail comparing her ſituation with our's, and feeling her own unhappineſs in proportion as ſhe felt our felicity.

Mrs. Brenton, who witneſſed the depreſſion of her daughter's ſpirits, did all in her power to revive them.

But Miſs Brenton was too deeply touched with the ſenſe of her own ſituation to open her mind for the reception of mirth.—'Tis ſtrange, ſaid ſhe to me, that thoſe who love us beſt, ſhould prove ſo inſtrumental in tormenting us moſt. There is but one way my mother can oblige me eſſentially, and that ſhe thinks it her eſſential duty to refuſe.

I took the liberty of letting Mr. Villars into the ſecret of her having a lover abroad. It was indeed a ſecret of ſuch a nature, as to be viſible in all Miſs Brenton's behaviour. Miſs Villars ſoon perceived it, and took notice of it to me with great concern.

cern. So much dejection in a young perſon naturally full of livelineſs, was, ſhe rightly judged, a ſure token that her heart was a prey to a moſt ſerious and violent paſſion.

There was ſomething in Miſs Brenton ſo lovely, and at the ſame time ſo intereſting, that ſhe attracted the particular attention of all who were in her company. Mr. Villars and my brother, though entirely devoted, the firſt to me, the ſecond to Miſs Villars, experienced equally thoſe tender ſentiments in her behalf, which though they be not love, are yet ſo near a kin to it.

In acquainting Mr. Villars with the ſituation of Miſs Brenton's mind, I was very cautious, one may well imagine, not to deſcend to particulars in which I bore ſo conſiderable a ſhare; and which, though well known to Mrs. Brenton and to my brother, none of us thought it proper to make any mention of at the preſent.

On our arrival at London we were welcomed by the agreeable intelligence that Mrs. Brenton's brother-in-law, a rich and miſerly old batchelor, was juſt dead; and that dying inteſtate, the whole of his fortune, which was very great, devolved to Miſs Brenton his niece, who was his neareſt relation.

This

This news gave me the moſt exquiſite joy; I ran to my dear friend, embraced her with tranſport, and loaded her with congratulations.—Auguſta, ſaid ſhe, it would be ridiculous in me to pretend indifference on ſo agreeable an addition to the means of commanding reſpect and importance; but I foreſee that the wealth and ſplendor of which I am to be miſtreſs, will probably prove more a ſnare than a bounty of Fortune.

I could not help blaming her for indulging ſuch gloomy reflections.—This, I ſaid, was treating Fortune with ill manners, and might induce that fickle Goddeſs to reſent ſuch uſage

by a degree of ſeverity proportionate to her preſent kindneſs.

—If Fortune, ſhe replied, intends me any good by the benefits ſhe has conferred upon me, I thank her for them; but if they ſhould eventually prove the ſource of affliction, have I not a right to conſider them as a real ſnare, to entangle me in difficulties ſtill greater than thoſe I have now to ſtruggle with?

The only difficulty ſhe had now to ſurmount was, I obſerved, the length of ſpace that lay between her and the object of her wiſhes. She would ſoon be of age, and when Mrs. Brenton ſaw that her determinations were unalterable,

alterable, ſhe would no longer oppoſe them.

There, ſays ſhe, lies the difficulty you make ſo light of. Time and place, proverbially the great regulators of all things, ſtand irremoveably in my away, and there is but one method to accelerate the one, and to approximate the other. Of this method I am totally debarred. In the mean while, obſtacles of various denominations will ariſe. Mr. Chabort aſſured me, as Mr. Tavannes did you, that I was the firſt of my ſex for whom he ever felt a ſincere predilection: but will that ſecure me from being the laſt? Surrounded as he is, from his merit and his opulence, by the

the temptations which the arts of our ſex may aſſail him with, do you imagine that he will have the ſtrength, or the inclination to reſiſt them, when he finds himſelf in a manner forſaken, and what he may perhaps call ſlighted?

Should he prove unfaithful, ſaid I, he will then become unworthy of you; and it would be your duty to forget him, as I have done Mr. Stanley, when I found he had forſaken me.

She ſhook her head with great ſignificancy at theſe words. If Mr. Stanley forſook you, it was not, ſaid ſhe, till after ſome years perſeverance in his attachment. If he could overcome a paſſion

a paſſion ſo long implanted in him, with how much more facility will my lover throw off thoſe chains that he has ſo lately put on.

I could not deny the juſtneſs of her obſervation; but ſtill contended that ſhe magnified a difficulty, which, being the only one ſhe had to encounter, might much more readily be ſurmounted, than if her attention was diſtracted by a multiplicity of others.

Think you ſeriouſly, anſwered ſhe, that there is no other? Does not my fortune make me liable to many perſecutions, which I ſhould not have otherwiſe experienced? The addreſſes of men of rank, which my mother will

will doubtleſs encourage, will come crowding upon me. Were I poſſeſſed of that wilfulneſs which ſteels ſo many of our ſex againſt all conſiderations, but thoſe which favour their paſſions, I might ſpeedily ſhake off all incumbrances; but the more conſpicuous Fortune has made me, the more I think it behoves me to act with decorum. In conferring riches upon me, ſhe has no leſs increaſed my pride. I will take no ſtep that is not fully warrantable, as it would not therefore become me to ſet my mother at defiance by a precipitate flight from her lawful juriſdiction over me, I will quietly ſubmit myſelf to it, until I ceaſe to be legally bound by maternal authority.

There

There was a nobleneſs in Miſs Brenton's ſentiments that ſtruck me with admiration. I could not refrain from ſaying, that Fortune was not blindfold when ſhe had behaved to her with ſo much munificence; and that were all the fortunate to copy after her, riches would produce far other effects than were uſually imputed to them.

CHAPTER XIX.

CONVERSATION BETWEEN MR. VILLARS AND MISS WOODVILLE—DISAGREEABLE SITUATION OF MISS BRENTON—STORY OF MRS. BARKING.

AFTER thanking me for my compliment, she then proceeded to ask me, whether I had made Mr. Villars acquainted with our joint adventure. I replied, it was my intention

tion to do it the next time I ſaw him. We both agreed that it ſhould no longer be delayed, leſt it might come to his knowledge by other means; but could it remain for ever concealed from him, ſtill there was a generoſity, if not a duty, in hiding from a lover no circumſtance in our lives that tended to the full elucidation of our character and conduct, and enabled him to form a proper judgment of the perſon with whom he propoſed an honourable connexion.

An opportunity offered itſelf of diſcloſing this matter to him the very moment we had reſolved upon it. We had juſt ſeated ourſelves for tea

after

after the preceding converſation, when Mr. Villars was announced. He came, it ſeems, to congratulate Miſs Brenton on the occaſion already mentioned. When he had paid her his compliments accordingly, and tea was finiſhed—Mr. Villars, I ſaid, I ſhould ill requite the partiality you honour me with, were I not to act with ingenuouſneſs and candour in all matters relating to my perſon. I have ſomething to impart which will undoubtedly excite your utmoſt aſtoniſhment; but I deemed myſelf bound to lay the whole before you, whatever the conſequences may prove.

This

This preface made a ſenſible impreſſion upon his countenance: he looked alternately at Miſs Brenton and me: his colour changed ſeveral times; and he ſeemed extremely anxious to know what it could be that I introduced in ſo ſerious and ſolemn a manner.

After recollecting myſelf, for I felt no ſmall embarraſſment for a minute or two, I reſolutely entered upon the ſubject, and went minutely, to the beſt of my memory, through every circumſtance of the adventure in which Miſs Brenton and I had been engaged, from the time of our being ſeized and carried off until our return to Bruſſels.

The

The perplexity of Mr. Villars at the commencement of my narrative was almoſt inexpreſſible: he appeared to look upon our caſes as deſperate: he turned pale, his eyes were fixed, his lips quivered, and the whole of his deportment manifeſted the deepeſt grief at the misfortune which he made no doubt had befallen us. It was therefore with equal indications of joy he found by the ſequel of the ſtory that our honour was ſafe and inviolate. He accompanied me with his cloſeſt attention throughout the remainder of my narrative; and when I had finiſhed, he ſeemed as if relieved from a burden which he had borne with the greateſt difficulty and pain.

On

On my ceaſing to ſpeak — Is this, my dear Miſs Woodville, ſaid he, the buſineſs for which you prepared me with ſo much gravity? What other conſequences can flow from it, than that I ſhould view Miſs Brenton and you as the moſt charming girls in the kingdom? I have not met, I muſt acknowledge, in the whole courſe of my life and experience, an adventure ſo ſingular in all its circumſtances; but it redounds ſo much to the honour of you both, that it is with great injuſtice to yourſelves you have hitherto refrained from communicating it.

After

After a moment's pauſe—But, ſaid he, had not my rival been taken off in the manner you have related, what muſt have been my own fate? While I lament the fall of a brave and gallant gentleman, it grieves me to reflect, that perhaps it was the only means left for the preſervation of both him and me.

Do not injure, ſaid I, the memory of a moſt worthy man. He was too noble in his diſpoſition to impoſe a compulſion upon mine; and while Mr. Villars exiſted, it was impoſſible for me to heſitate in my choice.

He

He was ſo enchanted with this reply, that ſeizing my hand, he kiſſed it with rapture.—This adventure, continued he, is one of thoſe paſſages in the hiſtory of human events, whereby it appears that much good may ariſe from a little evil. It was doubtleſs criminal to ſeize and captivate you both in ſo violent a manner. But had not this been done, would the ſplendor of your character have ever ſhone forth ſo conſpicuouſly as throughout the whole of this extraordinary tale; and, not to withhold the commendation due to your two admirers, would the generoſity of their ſentiments have been manifeſted ſo much to their honour? But, what is ſtill

more material to me, ſhould I have ſo fully known the worth of one whom I have ſo long admired?

He paid us a variety of other compliments in the ſame ſtrain; till obſerving Miſs Brenton to be very penſive, he begged to know the reaſon. Were I in France, I replied, and the object of my affections (looking tenderly at him) in England, do you think, Mr. Villars, I ſhould be otherwiſe than thoughtful?

This anſwer gave riſe to a long converſation; the reſult of which was, that Mr. Villars, my brother, and myſelf ſhould repreſent her daughter's caſe to

Mrs.

Mrs. Brenton in the moſt pathetic terms, and urge the impropriety of compelling her to give up a man who was every way deſerving of her; who had evidently beſtowed his ſincere and honourable affections upon her; who had gained her heart, and had therefore an inconteſtible claim to her perſon.

Theſe arguments were laid by us accordingly before Mrs. Brenton, as ſoon as ſhe was returned from a viſit ſhe had been paying to her lawyer in company with my brother, whom Mr. Villars took aſide in order to appriſe him of our deſign, and to engage him to act in concert with

us; which he did with great readineſs. She replied by ſhewing us a letter from Mrs. Morriſon, the contents of which were very alarming indeed. She informed my aunt that Mademoiſelle Chabort had written her, that the Canon of Rheims had, through his credit with ſome perſons of influence at court, obtained an inhibition againſt the marriage of her brother with Miſs Brenton, as being a Proteſtant. And ſhe was very apprehenſive that notwithſtanding he had determined to uſe every means in his power to procure the repeal of ſo cruel a reſtraint upon his inclinations, the bigotry of thoſe who had laid it upon him

him was ſuch, that no motives would prevail upon them to relent, and their power was ſo great, that there was little hope of encountering it with any ſuperior intereſt.

Mademoiſelle Chabort added, that this unexpected affair had thrown her and Madam Tavannes' family into the deepeſt conſternation. They feared, from the determinate temper of her brother, and his paſſion for Miſs Brenton, that ſhould his efforts to procure this inhibition to be cancelled prove unſucceſsful, he might be driven to adopt ſome deſperate reſolution.

Mrs. Brenton informed us that ſhe had received this letter in her daughter's abſence, and was very unwilling to communicate to her the intelligence it contained, till ſhe had conſulted us all three upon the ſubject. She had, ſhe ſaid, after much reflection, brought herſelf to conſent to this alliance, being convinced that her daughter's happineſs depended upon it; and was now ſincerely grieved that ſuch an obſtruction had ariſen as appeared inſurmountable.

We were all three ſtruck with equal ſurprize and ſorrow at theſe melancholy tidings. Miſs Brenton's attachment

ment was of ſo ſerious a nature, that we hardly knew what advice to give; whether to diſcloſe or conceal the news. It was ſo diſtant from her apprehenſions, that we judged a ſudden diſcloſure might affect her too powerfully. We concluded therefore to wait till ſome favourable circumſtance enabled us to lead her to this diſagreeable diſcovery in ſuch a manner as not to wound her ſenſations too deeply.

My feelings upon this occaſion were ſo pungent, that I found much difficulty in aſſuming any degree of cheerfulneſs in her preſence. The misfor-

tune that had befallen her lay continually upon my mind, and I viewed her as one condemned to wretchedneſs without any hopes to alleviate it. My affection for her was ſo ſtrong, that theſe reflections haunted me perpetually, and made me appear ſo diſconſolate that ſhe ſeveral times enquired the reaſon of it.

I know not whether I ſhould have long been able to refrain from revealing this mortifying ſecret, as ſhe ſo often preſſed me to acquaint her with the cauſe of the change ſhe obſerved in my temper. Luckily for us both, chance

chance brought about an opportunity to clear up this matter.

A lady of Mrs. Brenton's acquaintance waiting upon her about ſome buſineſs, was after the ſettlement of it aſked to dinner. She was a gentlewoman of great experience in the world, and had lived ſome years abroad with her huſband, who was a foreigner, and had married her in London while ſhe was very young. In the courſe of converſation, being of an open communicative temper, ſhe entertained us with many of the incidents of her life, which ſhe ſaid had been rendered very unhappy in conſequence of this

marriage. Notwithſtanding her huſband was a man of a civil, obliging diſpoſition, the difference of his perſuaſion, being a Roman Catholic, was the ſource of continual uneaſineſs between them. The longer they remained together, the more it increaſed. What rendered her ſituation particularly grievous, her children, as ſoon as they grew old enough to be truſted abroad, were every one taken from her, and ſent to diſtant places, where ſhe ſeldom could have the ſatisfaction of ſeeing them. It was principally her daughters from whoſe company ſhe was debarred in this cruel manner. The motive that induced her

her husband to treat her so harshly, was the fear that, being a Protestant, she might instil the principles of her religion into the minds of her children. Yet she assured us that bigotry was no part of her character, and that she had never testified any indecent warmth in the cause of Protestantism, much less had ever been at the pains of finding fault with her husband's way of thinking. She often expostulated with him upon the severity of such treatment, promising in the most solemn language never to open her lips upon religious matters to any of her children, if such were his desire; and requesting, in consequence of this

promiſe, that they might be permitted to live with her. But all entreaties were vain. He perſiſted in this unkind uſage of her till his death; and left by will the tuition of his family to ſuch of his relations, as he thought would ſtrictly obſerve the injunctions he gave them, to continue the ſame behaviour to his wife. The effects of this inhuman conduct were, that her children, having ſo long remained in the hands of ſtrangers, had loſt their natural affection for her. Notwithſtanding ſhe had written to them ſeverally, earneſtly deſiring they would at their own convenience favour her with a viſit in England, where, having

in-

inherited a decent patrimony from an aunt, ſhe was in a condition to give them a genteel reception, not one of them, though in good circumſtances, had yet accepted her invitation.

This narrative, which was delivered by Mrs. Barking (the gentlewoman's name) with great artleſſneſs and ſimplicity, made, I moſt joyfully perceived, a ſtrong impreſſion on Miſs Brenton. She could not help obſerving that it was a leſſon, how much caution was requiſite in forming ſo intimate a connexion as that of matrimony with a foreign gentleman of a different religion.—Eſpecially, added I, to reſide abroad for life.

This

This gentlewoman's ſtory gave occaſion to Mrs. Brenton to drop ſeveral hints to her daughter; which, I obſerved with much pleaſure, were attended to without any ſigns of diſapprobation. I ventured, two or three days after, to tell her, that when I coolly reflected on our late adventure, I thought it a great happineſs that ſo many obſtructions had ſtood in the way of a connexion, which, notwithſtanding the faireſt promiſes, might in the end have made me very unhappy.

I accompanied this reflection with ſo ſignificant a look, that ſhe took my

my meaning in its fulleſt extent.—Auguſta, ſaid ſhe, reaſon points one way; but (laying her hand upon her heart) paſſion points another. They both dictated in your caſe; and to that unanimity between them you are indebted for the pleaſing proſpect now before you. I wiſh now that ſome Mr. Villars had pre-occupied that place in my inclinations which, from their being unengaged, Mr. Chabert took poſſeſſion of.

She ſaid much more on the ſubject, all tending to prove that though ſhe could not diveſt herſelf of the idea of that gentleman, ſtill ſhe was con-

convinced that ſhe ought if poſſible to forget him. I clearly ſaw the fluctuation of her mind, and did all my endeavours to fix it on the ſecureſt ſide. I repreſented to her indirectly the ſituation ſhe might find herſelf in, by recalling to her attention what I had ſeveral times imagined mine would perhaps have proved, had it been the deſtiny of Mr. Tavannes to have married me. Mrs. Barking's ſtory was of infinite uſe on theſe occaſions. The bigotry of her huſband, and the deprivation of her children, were painted with all the force of colouring I could employ.

When

When I had ſufficiently worked upon her fears—for that taſk was left entirely to me—in order to prevent her entertaining any ſuſpicion of Mrs. Brenton, that lady, according to the ſcheme pre-concerted between her and me, and approved of by Mr. Villars and my brother, told her daughter one morning at breakfaſt, that ſhe had the preceding evening received a letter from her friend Mr. Morriſon, of which the purport was by no means agreeable to her, as, conformable to our inclinations, I had, ſaid ſhe, my dear Nancy, determined not to have oppoſed the addreſſes of your French lover.

This

This preamble greatly ſurprized Miſs Brenton, who exclaimed with heartfelt anguiſh—Whatever Fortune may have decided, I will give up all pretenſions to diſcernment, if Mr. Chabort has been faithleſs. If he died like his worthy friend in the bed of honour, I muſt acquieſce in the will of heaven, and mourn the loſs of one who will not eaſily be replaced.

No, my dear child, ſaid Mrs. Brenton, your friend is neither dead nor falſe; and yet it is no longer in his power to keep his faith with you. Read

Read this, and you will acknowledge my words to be true.

Miſs Brenton took the letter with a trembling hand. The date of it had been previouſly altered ſo as to make it appear but juſt received. She read it through with a melancholy compoſure, and returning it to her mother — My dear Auguſta, ſaid ſhe, turning to me, my prophecy goes forward to its accompliſhment; we are ſiſters in diſappointment. — It is, ſaid I, better to be diſappointed than miſerable. When a lover is falſe, which was my caſe, he deſerves not to be remembered: and when invincible

obſtacles

obſtacles ariſe between two lovers, the ſooner they deſiſt, the greater their prudence.

This, I muſt acknowledge, was poor comfort to a love-ſick mind. It was however received with thanks, and with a degree of fortitude which I had not expected. But the fact was, that Miſs Brenton, from the day that Mrs. Barking had dined with us, and related her hiſtory, had been brooding over it with an attention that had produced a multiplicity of reflections on the poſſibility of that gentlewoman's caſe becoming her own. Theſe operating on a ſenſible and judicious mind, had in a great

great meaſure prepared her for the event which deprived her of her lover, by ſhewing her the dangers which would attend a connexion with him, and thereby diminiſhing the violence of her attachment.

It was therefore with the higheſt ſatisfaction that Mrs. Brenton ſaw the probability of her daughter's being releaſed from her ſlavery, as ſhe termed it, to a ſtranger, who with all his merit might through the influence exerciſed upon him, in a country wherein religious prejudices ſtill bear too great a ſway, have, againſt his inclinations and better knowledge, embittered her

days

days by complying with the ſuggeſtions of ſuperſtitious and weak-minded people in power, from ſelf intereſt, and the fear of offending them.

END OF THE SECOND VOLUME.